

# **HARMANUS BLEECKER**

**AN ALBANY DUTCHMAN**

**BY  
HARRIET LANGDON PRUYN RICE**



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HARMANUS BLEECKER

*An Albany Dutchman*



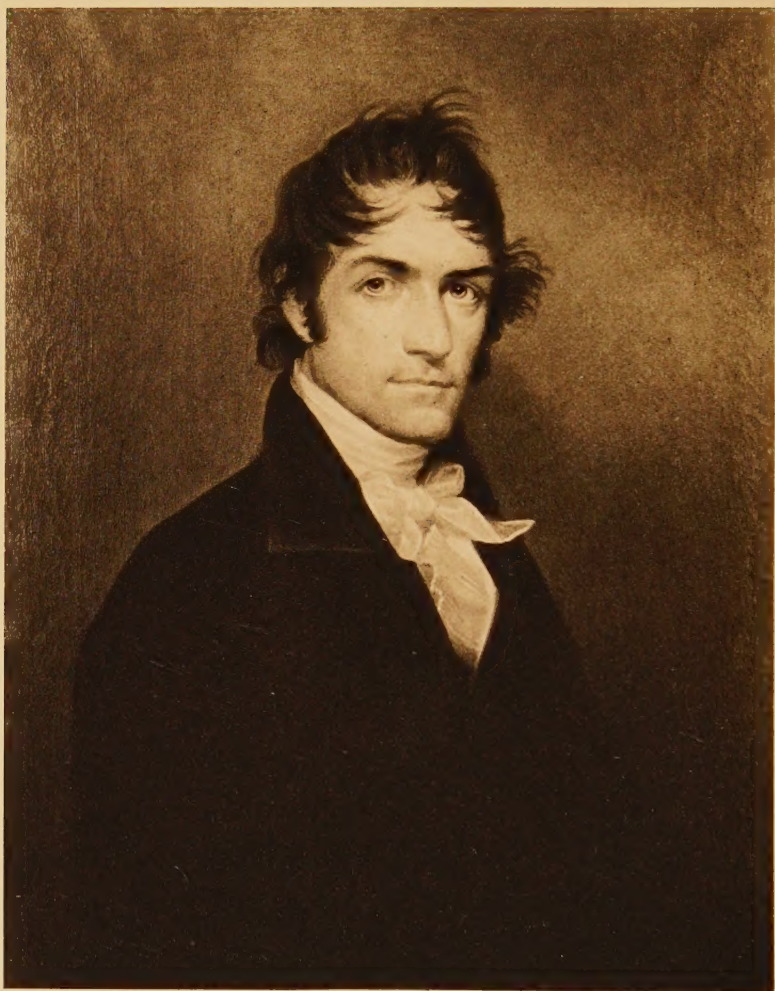
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*Harriet Langdon Bruyn Ric*

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HARMANUS BLEECKER

ABOUT 1820

*From a portrait now in the Harmanus Bleecker Library*



# HARMANUS BLEECKER

AN ALBANY DUTCHMAN

1779—1849

BY

HARRIET LANGDON PRUYN RICE



*Barry University Library*  
*Miami, FL 33161*

ALBANY, N. Y.

1924

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TO ALL THOSE  
WHO HONOR ALBANY'S PAST HISTORY,  
WHO PRIZE ITS PRESENT  
AND  
WHO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE YEARS TO COME





## FOREWORD

WHEN, in 1838, at the age of fifty-nine, Harmanus Bleecker started from Albany to make his first and long thought of journey to Europe, and subsequently became United States Chargé d'Affaires in the Netherlands, he left his business matters in the care of a man who proved himself unequal to the trust. When the fear that his affairs were being mismanaged became a certainty, Mr. Bleecker wrote from the Hague to my father, John V. L. Pruyn, in Albany, asking him to act as his "agent" or legal adviser.

My father was then a young lawyer just establishing himself and but lately married. He had great admiration for the distinguished jurist thirty years his senior who honored him by this request and he complied willingly.

Through this relationship the papers of Harmanus Bleecker came into the possession of my sister, Mrs. Charles S. Hamlin, and me, and on these papers—Mr. Bleecker having left no journal—this short biography is based.

It seems to me that the people of Albany will be glad to know something more definite of a man whose career brought honor to his city, whose

## FOREWORD

property was left for its benefit and whose name, placed on the library building for which all his fortune was finally used, stands for those traits of character which make for good citizenship and ought ever to be admired.

HARRIET LANGDON PRUYN RICE

135 WASHINGTON AVENUE  
ALBANY, N. Y.  
ST. NICHOLAS EVE  
In the year of  
Albany's Tercentenary  
1924

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*The pictures of Albany are from paintings of the time  
photographed by Augustus H. Pruyn*





HARMANUS BLEECKER

*An Albany Dutchman*



# HARMANUS BLEECKER

## AN ALBANY DUTCHMAN

*Veracity, true simplicity of heart, how valuable are these always!*  
CARLYLE.

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### YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

IN THE DAYS when the oldest citizens of Albany could remember hearing their grandparents call the settlement Beverwyck, when the waters of the Foxenkill, Rутtenkill, and Beverkill were rushing down the valleys from the western hills, and sturgeon were plentiful in the river; when old men sat at evening before Dutch doors on the stoops of gable-end houses, smoking long pipes from Gouda, and the Dutch language was heard frequently in street and church and home; in short, when Dutch customs still prevailed—although the ensign of the Netherlands had disappeared and the Union Jack had been raised and lowered and the Stars and Stripes had come to stay; and when life went along so placidly that people took time to honor the past as well as to enjoy the present, there was born in Albany a boy who grew up to be a good and generous man. His name was Harmanus Bleecker. Always

giving much of his time to the service of city, state, and country, Harmanus Bleeker was justly considered one of Albany's most eminent citizens. And, with five generations in the United States alone of the blood of the Netherlands back of him, it was not strange that his appearance and attitude of mind should be markedly Dutch. His portrait, painted by Alexander,\* shows a man of distinguished bearing, with the breadth of face so characteristic of the people of the Netherlands, and with an unusual width between the eyes and an ample mouth said to denote the qualities of trustworthiness and generosity. All his life Harmanus Bleeker revered and cultivated everything that had to do with the land of his ancestors; and from childhood he talked so well the classical Dutch of two hundred years earlier, learned from his parents, that in later years when he became United States Chargé d'Affaires to the Netherlands and was presented at Court, the King said to him, "You speak better Dutch than we do in Holland." \*\*

It was in 1658 that his paternal ancestor, Jan

\* Probably Francis Alexander who came from Windham, Connecticut. He was well known in the early part of this century and finally made Boston his home. There he painted Charles Dickens. His portrait of Mrs. Fletcher Webster in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, is his best known work.

\*\* Romeyn Brodhead's letters.



## YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

Jansen Bleecker, born in Meppel, in the province of Overijssel, set forth from the Netherlands to seek his fortune in Nieuw Amsterdam, later known as New York. But after only a short stay there he sailed up the Hudson to the older settlement of Fort Orange, or Beverwyck, as it then was called. Here he spent the rest of his life.

After the settlement was taken by the British in 1664 and named Albany, and in 1686 proclaimed by Governor Dongan a city, Jan Jansen Bleecker took prominent part in its government. He was one of the first aldermen named in its charter and later became recorder, and in 1700 mayor. Two of his sons inherited his interest in civic affairs and both held successively the offices of recorder and mayor.

Jacob Bleecker, Jr., the great-grandson of this Jan Jansen Bleecker and the father of Harmanus Bleecker, was an Albany merchant. In his ledger, bound in leather and tied with leather thongs, is recorded an interesting list of the articles in which he dealt. The entries there show the store was ready to supply not only wheat, flax, butter, rum, rice, and maple sugar, but also blankets, stockings, and gloves. There were, as well, various entries of the sale of powder for fire-arms. The accounts were kept in pounds,

shillings, and pence, and with exactitude and neatness. The entries were made in English, but here and there a Dutch word anglicised survived, which would be natural in a community settled by the Dutch and subsequently conquered by the English. For instance, instead of the English words "small-shot" and "bushel", the Dutch words "hagel" and "schepel" were constantly used. The spelling of those days was somewhat uncertain, for each person followed in this matter his own inclination; so in looking through the ledger it is not surprising to find various errors in what we would now call correct spelling. S-a-u-l-t, instead of s-a-l-t, and f-l-o-w-e-r instead of f-l-o-u-r were often mentioned in the list of sales. Here and there also was record of transactions that are puzzling but possible in a friendly and small community, such as this: "To John A. Bratt, three shillings for your mother-in-law."

Harmanus Bleecker's mother, Elizabeth Wendell, was the daughter of Hermanus and Barbara Bratt Wendell, and Hermanus Wendell was the great fur trader of Albany. He lived at 98 State Street in a substantial house with gable-end to the street, which he built in 1716. From this house his daughter Elizabeth was married to Jacob Bleecker. She long survived her husband,

YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD



THE WENDELL HOUSE,  
1716-1841

*The Home of Harmanus Bleecker's Mother.*

and throughout the many years of her widowhood when she and her son Harmanus lived together, his devotion to her was manifested in many ways.

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Bleecker had three sons. The oldest, Jacob, died unmarried and the second, Hermanus, lived but a few months. Upon the birth of a third son, the parents were merely following an ancient Dutch custom when they gave him the name of the son whom they had just lost. According to the records of the First Reformed Church of Albany, Hermanus—or as he wrote it later, Harmanus—Bleecker was born October 24 and baptized October 31, 1779, in the presence of his maternal grandparents.\* The house in which he lived and in which his childhood and early manhood were passed stood on the corner of Steuben and Chapel Streets and had some ground about it.\*\*

\* The church records give as the children of Jacob Bleecker, Jr., and Elizabeth Wendell:

I. Jacob, born March 2, 1777; baptized March 12, 1777, in the presence of Johannes H. Ten Eyck and Geertruy Wendell.

II. Hermanus, born October 9, 1778; baptized October 18, 1778, in the presence of Hermanus and Barbara Wendell.

III. Hermanus, born October 24, 1779; baptized October 31, 1779, in the presence of Hermanus and Barbara Wendell.

\*\* 32 Steuben Street.

In later years Harmanus Bleecker replaced this ancient building with two brick houses, three stories high, and he also built two houses on the corner of Steuben and Pearl Streets, for his property extended from Chapel Street to Pearl Street.

On this site now stands the office building of the Standard Oil Company of New York.



## YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

When Harmanus Bleecker was born, Albany consisted of three hundred houses, and the Night Watch made its round calling the hour.\*

Of his childhood and boyhood nothing definite is known, but as the Academy for Boys, of which he later was to become a trustee, was not in existence, probably he went for his schooling to Mr. George Merchant's Academy, then in its prime. This was carried on successfully in the Johannes Beekman house on Pearl Street, built in 1725 and later called the Vanderheyden Palace. Only a few years earlier the war for Independence had come to a successful close; its great generals of Dutch descent, Philip Schuyler, Peter Gansevoort, and Abraham Ten Broeck, were still a part of Albany's daily life, and constantly must have been looked at with admiration by the serious-minded little boy while walking along Pearl Street, carrying his school books. Possibly the child also saw on the streets many strangers of distinction. Throughout the Hudson Valley hospitality was then at its height, and Albany stood

\* There were at that time six watchmen who were paid by the city two shillings and six pence each, in cash, for every night they did duty. In summer they were given three pence extra a week for candles and in winter six pence extra a night when both candles and wood were required. The Watch House itself was provided for the men in a convenient part of the city and from this house they went forth, every hour, all night long.

From *Munsell's Annals of Albany*.

well to the front among the cities welcoming friend and traveler.

The Van Rensselaer Manor House \* at the north end and the Schuyler Mansion \*\* at the south end of the city were centers of extensive and delightful entertaining. And only a few years later General Ten Broeck's handsome house, \*\*\* built on his large estate near the north line of the town, made another hospitable meeting place. Who knows but that the little boy so quietly brought up may have waved his hand to General Washington and General Lafayette, as they passed in their coaches, or have seen later, on his daily walk to and from school, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay or Gouverneur Morris as they drove by on their way to one or the other of these fine old houses? Certainly all these great men visited Albany during his childhood and youth.

When the lad reached an age for determining his career, he had no inclination to enter business with his father, and therefore decided to take up the study of law. His maternal grandfather, for

\*Destroyed, but rebuilt in large part at Williamstown, Massachusetts, where it is used as a fraternity house of Williams College.

\*\* Now owned by the State, made into a museum, and open daily to the public.

\*\*\* Still a private residence and a hospitable meeting place. After General Ten Broeck's death, it was bought by George W. Merchant and after his death it passed into the possession of Thomas W. Olcott, whose grandson, Robert Olcott, now makes it his home.

## YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

whom he was named, had been not only a fur trader, but also an Assistant Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and this fact may have turned the grandson's attention to study for the bar. In those days there were few law schools. In order to get the necessary legal training, a young man arranged to enter as a clerk the office of some eminent lawyer, and there by constant study and observation prepared himself for his examinations.

Already by the end of the eighteenth century able lawyers had established themselves in Albany.\* It was a city rapidly increasing in importance because of its excellent position at the head of sloop navigation on a great river. It was also the storehouse of the trade between the eastern and western parts of the country as well as to and from the Great Lakes and Canada. Among its well-known members of the bar was John Vernor Henry, and into his office on the first day of January, 1797, Harmanus Bleecker, at the age of seventeen, entered. Three years later Mr. Henry took as his partner James J. Emmot, of Poughkeepsie, one of the brilliant men of the time, and in this way the young student during the last year of his apprenticeship had the advantage of contact with an unusual, forceful mind.

\* Albany became the Capital of New York State in 1797.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

In 1801, when Bleecker's legal studies were completed, Mr. Henry gave him the following letter to carry to New York, to which city he traveled in order to take his examinations:

*To the Honble The Justices of the Supreme  
Court of Judicature of the State of New  
York.*

I do hereby certify that Mr. Harmanus Bleecker entered as a clerk in my office on the first day of 1797 and has since that time actually served as a clerk to me and that his moral character is unexceptionable.

Albany 16 April 1801—  
JOHN V. HENRY.

That this journey was a great event in the young man's life—he was barely twenty-one—and that his father impressed on him the chance of learning the latest news about transactions in wheat and that he dutifully remembered to do so, is shown in the two following letters, which are the earliest of his I have found:

New York 24 April 1801.

Dear Father:

You should have heard from me ere this, but not one Albany sloop has sailed from here since I have been in town, nor was it very necessary to write you since Captn. Bleecker must have given you the necessary information respecting the price of wheat. We arrived here on Sunday  
[10]



## YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

morning. Our passage considering the number of passengers was tolerably good. I was at the Albany pier yesterday morning and was informed that wheat of the best quality would sell for 18/. Captns. Boyd and Fryer will sail as soon as the wind will permit, and they will be able to give you the latest information. The weather has been very unpleasant since I have been in town—as the wind is now from the north I will send this by mail. I stay at Mr. Bleecker's. If you write me, direct to No. 48 Wall Street. Yesterday I took a ride to the State Prison—much is to be learned from visiting such a place. People here think and talk of nothing but the election—both parties are equally sanguine. I have nothing interesting to communicate. If any change should take place in the price of wheat you shall hear from me immediately. Remember me to my good mother, Jacob, and all friends.

I am your affectionate son,

H. BLEECKER.

New York 27 April 1801.

Dear Father:

I write this at the Albany Bason. I have just inquired among our Captains respecting the price of wheat. The prices now are from 17/ to 18/6—according to the quality. As to the probability of wheat's rising or falling it is idle to enquire from the merchants here, for their interests will hardly allow them to give a candid answer, nor can they speak on the subject with any kind of certainty. I pass my

HARMANUS BLEECKER

time pretty agreeably. I am treated with considerable politeness and attention by friends and acquaintances. I shall have an opportunity to go out much this week. The last the weather was rainy cold raw and stormy every day so that I was pretty much confined. Yesterday I dined at Dr. Tillary's with Mr. Van Slyck. I feared that this dinner would have kept me from Church, but fortunately the Dr's family belonged to Mr. Mason's, so that I was brought to hear that unrivalled preacher. There is nothing new in the City, nothing thought or talked of but the election. Even Mr. Mason could not avoid addressing his congregation on the subject, yesterday. The time for our examination is not yet appointed. It will probably be Thursday or Friday evening. When you write me which I hope you'll do, direct to No. 48 Wall Street. Remember me to the family and other friends.

Yours affectionately

H. BLEECKER.

J. Bleeker Junr.

Having passed successfully his examinations, Harmanus Bleeker was admitted to the bar of New York State and returned to Albany to enter upon the practice of his profession. Success came promptly. Shortly after establishing himself, he received a letter from Theodore Sedgwick, of Stockbridge, the distinguished Massachusetts statesman and jurist and a Signer of

## YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

the Declaration of Independence, who suggested to Mr. Bleecker the taking of his son as law partner. Bleecker being agreeable to this plan, and all the preliminaries having been arranged, Theodore Sedgwick, Jr., a young man of talent, charm and merit came to Albany and entered into a partnership which continued in greatest amity for over twenty years.

“Mr. Sedgwick talked much of you”, wrote an old friend, thirty years later at the time of his law partner’s death, to Mr. Bleecker at the Hague, “and dwelt with honest pleasure on your mutual business connection in which he said all your accounts were kept in one book, your money in one drawer, and in separating, your pecuniary affairs were wound up in an hour!”

As the years passed, the law firm of Bleecker and Sedgwick prospered and became famous, not only in New York State but throughout the country. Among the many men outside of Albany who sought counsel, and whose letters have been preserved, were Philip Van Courtlandt, William Jay, Peter Augustus Jay, Beverly Robinson, Elkanah Watson, and Hamilton Fish. The office of Bleecker & Sedgwick at 82 Market Street, now Broadway, at 109 State Street and finally at 64 State Street, was a busy place. Not

only were important cases undertaken by the firm, but its rooms were filled with students from near and far, many of whom became later well known in the profession.\*

At Mr. Sedgwick's house in Albany and at the summer home in Stockbridge, built by his father in 1785, Harmanus Bleecker was a frequent guest. Mrs. Sedgwick, who was Susan Ridley Livingston, a granddaughter of Governor William Livingston of New Jersey, was a woman who possessed the wit, ability, and sympathy which make a house a center of hospitality. The happy family life charmed the friendly, dignified Bleecker. He entered warmly into its interests, and was held

\* Among those students were Henry D. Sedgwick, Robert Sedgwick, Solomon Southwick, John W. Taylor (Speaker of the House of Representatives, 1825-26), David Rust, Henry Jones, Abraham Holdridge, Cornelius R. D. Lansing, Jacob Dox, Peter P. J. Kean, Jacob Sutherland (Judge of old Supreme Court), Henry W. Channing, John Rodman, Thomas D. Higgins, Sterling Goodenow, Isaac Truax, Gideon Hawley, Peter Gansevoort, Henry Starr, David Raymond, Ebenezer Baldwin, William Darling, Abraham Schuyler, Henry H. Fuller, John Porter, E. P. Storrs, James Dexter, Gilbert L. Thompson, James C. Bloodgood, John D. Crocker, Cornelius Gates, Frederick Matthews, Bargood E. Hand, Richard V. De Witt, Frederick Whittlesey (Judge of Supreme Court), N. N. Hall, Henry J. Linn, C. V. S. Kane, Metcalf Yates, Hamilton Bogart, John B. Van Schaick, Augustus Beardslee, Henry G. Wheaton, S. V. R. Bleecker, W. Duer Henderson, Charles Fenno Hoffman, Bradford R. Wood, David Dudley Field, D. A. Noble, Philip S. Van Rennselaer, Harvey Hyde, Charles Walsh, S. Cook, P. V. S. Wendover, E. T. T. Martin, Israel T. Hatch, Leonard Bement, W. H. Bogart, John B. Luce, Charlemagne Tower, John James Kane, Henry H. Martin, Charles N. Rowley, Cambridge Livingston, John W. Bradford, Francis Randall.

*Munsell's Annals of Albany.*

## YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

in much affection by all the household. At one time rumor even said that he and Miss Catherine Sedgwick, the sister of his law partner and the author of "New England Life", "Redwood", and other well-known novels of that time, might marry. But nothing of this sort resulted from their friendship; Bleeker's actual love affair took place much later in his life, when he was past sixty.

After the Sedgwicks ceased to live in Albany, the occasional summer visits paid by Mr. Bleeker to the Sedgwick Mansion at Stockbridge and the exchange of interesting long letters—the writing of which was an art enjoyed in those days—kept him in touch with the circle so dear to him; and in this manner, until death parted its members, the friendship was valued and continued.

Letter from Miss Catherine Sedgwick:

Stockbridge 11 July 1824.

My dear Friend:

I should be unjust to myself did I withhold the expression of my gratitude to you for the letter which I received from you last week; and received with pleasure similar to that which a child feels, when on its first feeble attempts to go alone, it is inspired with confidence by a voice of encouragement and kindness.

The pain which a woman must feel on pre-



HARMANUS BLEECKER

senting herself before the public, and one too of secluded habits and tastes, does not perhaps admit of a compensation, if there is any it must be found in that approbation which is the result and proof of sincere friendship, & in the hope of contributing in some small measure to the moral and religious improvement of our fellow beings.

We have again assembled in health and happiness on this favorite spot, which you know we regard as much a Paradise as any known on the Earth since our Parents were excluded from the first.

We all hope that you will not permit the summer to pass away without enjoying here the smiles of this beautiful season to which your compassion to us in our adversity last winter has entitled you. Your friends all unite in affte. remembrance.

Believe me sincerely & gratefully

Your friend

CATHERINE M. SEDGWICK

H. Bleeker, Esq.

Not only was Harmanus Bleeker an eminent lawyer, but he was also a public spirited citizen. He served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Boys' Academy, as a member of the Board of the Albany Bible Society, and later in life as a member of the Board of the State Normal School. In 1822 he was appointed a regent of the University of the State of New York and gave much

time during twelve years to the work which in those days was necessary. At that period, besides its duties in Albany, the members of the Board of Regents, divided into groups of three or four, visited every year in person all academies in the state. Because of the slowness of travel these journeys took some days to accomplish.\* In recognition of Mr. Bleecker's varied interests in educational and legal matters and his distinguished career at the Hague, Union College gave him in 1844, although not one of its alumni, the degree of LL.D.

Also interested in religious matters, Mr. Bleecker frequently wrote articles regarding church affairs. Even during his life in the Netherlands he took time to describe by letter to friends at home who wrote to ask about such matters, the various religious customs and procedure of that country which differed from those in his own.

And Mr. Bleecker was especially interested in the political life of the state and nation and in this he took frequent and effective part. He served at one time as Commissioner of the State of New York to settle the boundary between New York and New Jersey. DeWitt Clinton, when

\* See appendix.

Governor, although politically opposed to him, offered him the post of Adjutant General, which he declined, while appreciating the generosity of the act. In 1811, when thirty-two years old, Mr. Bleecker was elected as a Federalist to represent the Albany district in the Twelfth Congress. This greatly gratified him. It was an event promising new and interesting duties. Before he started for Washington, John Rodman,\* one of his former law students, wrote:

Paris 18th September 1811.

Dear Bleecker

I have just been informed, by a letter from Robt. Sedgwick, of your election as member of congress of which I had not before heard, and on which I most sincerely congratulate you. You enter on your political career, which I hope will be a long and an honorable one, at a very critical period of our country. Very serious and important questions will doubtless be submitted to your deliberation at the commencement of the session of congress, and you will have to decide many questions on principles which will be frequently at variance. I know too well the purity and independence of your views to presume that you will at any time

\* Although a student of law in the office of Bleecker and Sedgwick, John Rodman was a contemporary of Bleecker's. He was a thorough master of the French language and published a translation of the Commercial Code of France.

YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

suffer yourself to be misled by *party* considerations.

Hoping soon to have the pleasure of taking  
you by the hand, I remain very truly

Your affectionate friend

JN. RODMAN

After Mr. Bleecker reached Washington, there came to him from Mrs. Theodore Sedgwick, the wife of his law partner, this charming letter full of Albany and family news:

Albany Deer. 15th 1811

Monday Eveng.

Believe me my dear Sir your letter was very welcome, & though I have so long delayed to tell you so, it is not that it was either uninteresting or unimportant. The former it certainly could not be to any of your friends, and so very far from the latter was it, that I felt no inconsiderable degree of pride & self-complacency when I announced (as I took especial good care to do, at two or three tea parties) that *I* had received a letter from *Mr. Bleecker*, & so & so *he* wrote to *me*.

As I look at my writing and my blunders, I feel the necessity of apologizing for the former, by telling you that husband is out & the pen-knife in his pocket—and as for the latter, just shift the blame on Dame Nature—for surely I never wrote a letter in my life without them, & I am too old now to mend my habits, tho' I will my *pen* as soon as Theodore comes in. You

HARMANUS BLEECKER

must take it as it is, a plain hum-drum sort of an epistle. To begin with Domestic Intelligence, your mother is well. I saw her yesterday. Sally is well and blooming; we often talk of you when we are together and Sally says she is glad you do not like Washington as it is a pretty good evidence that Albany and Albany friends are uppermost in your heart yet. . . . Having now traveled down Steuben Street, I'll just stop at home and tell you that my boy is as fine a child as all the Southern States can produce; he is, as he has ever been, very healthy and very good.\* . . . We hear frequently from our dear Aunt Symmes, today we heard for the first of her arrival at Bedford, she passed some days in N. Y. & paid Matilda a visit. . . . Our friend Mr. Kane is well, and regrets your absence very sincerely—he expressed and evinced great pleasure at the recd. of your letter, and I heard him nearly as communicative of its contents, as I was of mine—you may rely on it these favors of yours are by no means lightly esteemed, so you have encouragement to be liberal of them.

I would fain my dear Mr. Bleecker give you some intelligence, some news, or something that would gratify and amuse you; but truly I just go over and again the same round of Domestic Duties, and household arrangements, without anything to vary the scene, or afford matter of communication. I rise tolerably early, dress

\* Theodore Sedgwick 3d, born in Albany in 1811, and died at Stockbridge in 1859 at the time when he was United States District Attorney.



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my boy, eat my breakfast, wash my tea things, adjust my pantry, order dinner, then eat it—perhaps in the meantime some female friend trips in for a half hour, during which we compare notes about our Domestics, exchange recipes, and after several reproaches for seeing each other so seldom, promise to be sociable and part—during the afternoon, which is next to nothing at this season, my boy occupies me considerably, and in fact the whole day goes without much profit. You ask me to tell you what I read. You will see from the foregoing statement that but very little of my time is devoted to the *mind*; then you ask what I think; now if Mr. Locke is correct in his Philosophy of reflection and sensation, you can judge pretty accurately from the picture I have drawn, what I *see* and *hear*, and consequently what I *think*. I can not give you news about any of your friends, for they have done nothing that I know of worth telling since you left us. The circumstance of Mr. Jephson's moving here is one of the most pleasant that have occurred since your departure (not that I would imply that that was of the same description) they are very commodious & agreeably situated in Lansing's house in Columbia Street—by the way what shall we do for a house? I am crazy to move out of this crazy building,\* but your office is such a weight on my heels I cannot get suited, and husband will never part from it, nor would I wish it indeed. Sutherland is

\* 82 Market Street.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

going to build in one of those lots between John Henry's and Jacob Mancius's and the two Mr. Hutton's intend filling the other two. I wish you and Theodore were rich enough to build your mother and me good houses, however for your part, if you will take care to build up the nation, we will excuse you the house. How do politics agree with you "for I know they are not your humour"—have you lost health or temper, or both by them yet? Your poor mother is very anxious about the former. She would not care much if you were in a passion every time you assembled with your brethren, as long as you are *well* enough to fight it out with them. As you are exempt from postage I scribble on to any length. This must cease to be a privilege if all your correspondents avail themselves of it to the extent that I have. The tax on your time would be greater, than any formerly levied on your pocket. Now if I was in any circle of our friends, remembrances and kind messages to Mr. Bleeker would over-whelm me and my poor goose-quill; but being snugly seated by my nursery fire, with only husband at my elbow, you must be contented with the expression of our friendship and affectionate remembrance—which we beg you to accept largely—and if you are disposed to read any more such Domestic details, & more Bulletins of Health and Safety as this is, signify your wish & I will give them with pleasure—let me hear from you when letters to more important correspondents do not interpose, and I shall be happy if I can afford

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## YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

you any gratification by letting you hear of us  
& ours. Please to present my respects to Mr.  
Gold and believe me very sincerely your  
friend

SUSAN A. L. SEDGWICK

Other Albany friends also wrote, among them  
James Kane,\* affectionately called by his friends  
"Uncle Jimmy."

Albany dec. 17. 1811

This will be handed by Mr Isaiah Townsend  
who informs me that He intends starting to-  
morrow morning for Washington City. I can-  
not let so favorable an Opportunity pass with-  
out dropping a few lines to my excellent friend  
Bleecker, merely to say that after the holy-  
days, I intend regularly to write Him twice a  
week, as long as He remains at Washington  
and at the same time to beg His Kind in-  
dulgence in overlooking my almost Criminal  
neglect in not answering His very acceptable  
Letter of the 16th of last month. Your friends  
in this City are all in perfect health. Albany  
never was, in my time, so dull as it is at present  
and has been for six weeks past; the loss of  
your society, my fine fellow, is more felt than I

\* James Kane died in 1851. He was for years the generous  
merchant prince of Albany, and his home a center of delightful  
hospitality. When he was sixty all his fortune vanished and he  
surrendered everything he had to his creditors, but he finally  
reluctantly consented to a few of them remitting their claims  
so that he might have \$200 a year for his personal needs. Thus  
he lived for the last twenty years of his life rich in character  
and enjoying greatly his books and his friends at whose houses  
he was always a welcome guest.

*Munsell's Annals of Albany.*

HARMANUS BLEECKER

could have well conceived, and much more, I am sure, than your modesty will permit you to believe. I can only say *Albany sincerely loves you.*

Mrs B. and Miss C. have both got to be "politicians" this winter, and are very desirous of hearing from you, at least, thro' the papers; don't disappoint them. Expectation is on tiptoe & I hope ere the session is over we shall have something that will make us feel proud of Albany.

I don't much wonder that you feel some timidity when you reflect on the "Awful responsibility" you have, in supporting the reputation, in Congress, of this Celebrated City of which you are now its sole representative.

I shall write you soon again  
dear Bleeker, in haste,  
truly &c  
JAMES KANE.

Mr. Bleeker's duties in Washington took him from Albany for a good part of two years and left his mother much alone, but her heart and interest were with him, and she kept him in touch with Albany life and watched over his wardrobe as well as his health with solicitude. Here is one of her letters:

Albany 25 May 1812

My dear Son

I received your Letters. You have heard of the Death of your Grandmother. She is no  
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## YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

more. I was surprised to hear that you had not heard from the family in a long time. Your uncle Lansing told me that H. Lansing wrote often to you and informed you how your Grandmother was, but it seems he has not done so. I wish you had been here to hear her speak in her last moments. Such dying I never witnessed before. She was blessed with the possession of her reason to the very last. She had not the least doubt of her salvation. She said she trusted in that Saviour to whom she had given her Soul many years ago and a thousand times since. A week before she died all her pains were removed, for this she had prayed and the Lord answered her prayers, this time she spent in praising the Lord for his goodness. The day before she died she mentioned to your aunt Lansing that she had long had an impression on her mind that she would die the 30th day of the month, and so it was, she died the next morning, being the 30th, sooner indeed than we expected, as it appeared she might have lived yet a fortnight. I am not able to inform you all the particulars of her death. If it please the Lord that I may see you again I hope to tell you in my own language, but when shall that be? I was much alarmed to hear that you will not be home before July. Since it must be so let me hear often from you. We are all well. You desire to know if your aunts mean to continue to keep house. They must for this year, they have the house on hand. It is somewhat remarkable that in the month of



HARMANUS BLEECKER

February they spoke to your Grandmother of hiring a small house and to move in May, that then she would have more Comfort. She answered no, that she would well move in May, meaning to her grave. She was buried on the 2nd of May. Your aunts are very much afflicted for their loss, they have been very unwell mostly the whole winter, they are some better now, they long very much to see you. You wish me to let you know if I am in want of money. I do indeed want some, altho' I am as saving as possible, still there must be some. I have received thirty dollars from Mr Sedgwick and if it would be the same thing to you I can again apply to him, for which I shall wait your answer. I shall endeavor to send your bundle of Clothing, you must however provide yourself with black pantaloons and waistcoat before you arrive, it (cloth?) being very scarce here. Your Aunts and Maria send their best respects to you.

I remain your affectionate Mother  
E. BLEECKER

And Theodore Sedgwick, always his attached friend, also wrote him from time to time. One of these letters said:

Albany 16 Novr. 1812

Dear Bleecker

I am surprised, that you mention, that you have yet not received a line from me. Before you reached Washington, I enclosed to you a letter from Mr. Goldsborough.

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## YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

We have nothing new here. The Clintonians are making large bets upon his election. They consider North Carolina as safe. Pray tell me what the prospect is? If Mr. Madison can go on with so formidable an opposition to him, as there is in the North, then I am mistaken. I consider peace as certain, whether he is elected or not. Do not you? Do not the men of the South, begin a little to misgive, at this arraying of one part of the country against the others? We are all well. Your mother took tea with us yesterday. She is well. I have not heard from Stockbridge or from my father for some days. I see that you are one of the naval committee. I hope you and our friends generally will, make every effort so as, at this propitious moment, to commit, the administration men to as great an extent, in the amount of appropriations, as possible.

What think you of the perpetual motion? If true, it has made a new world for us.

I hope to hear from you often.

Yours affectionately

T. SEDGWICK, JR.

H. Bleecker, Esq.

## CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

WITH so happy a nature and so kind an outlook on the world, it was no wonder that Mr. Bleecker while in Congress formed enduring friendships. Peculiarly stirring were the times. James Madison was President. British sea power, unwisely exercised, was bringing Great Britain and the United States to the brink of war. Henry Clay was making speeches in favor of a declaration of war; John Randolph, of Roanoke, was making long and eloquent speeches against it. That picturesque, fiery scholar of Virginia, with the able legislator, Josiah Quincy of Massachusetts, and the kindly Charles Goldsborough of Maryland, who in 1818 became its Governor, were all three serving their country in the same capacity as was Harmanus Bleecker. The Albany Representative in Congress was soon admitted to their circle, and when his term of office ended and he returned home, all three of these men continued for many years to write him letters of interest and affection.

The earliest letter from Mr. Goldsborough was written from his home on the eastern shore of Maryland and described graphically an incident of the War of 1812.

## CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

Shoal Creek, near Cambridge

April 27th, 1813.

My dear Sir,

Among the gratifications that have fallen to my lot since we parted at Washington, the receipt of your very friendly letter of the 5th Inst. has not been the least. It is particularly valued as an additional and conclusive testimony of what I before believed, that the impressions of friendship, and of more than common esteem and regard, which had, on my part, resulted from our accidental association and acquaintance, had pervaded your heart also. Your letter was received on the 14th. On the preceding Friday, our neighborhood had been alarmed by the arrival at Cambridge of 15 or 20 shallops, or bay-craft, as we call them, seeking refuge in our river from the British fleet, which was advancing up the bay and had then got as far as opposite to Hooper's Island, the lower part of our County, and to the mouth of Patuxent river on the western shore. About that part of the bay they had taken 20 or 30 vessels of the above description and the fugitives I have mentioned before, being warned of their danger by some of their countrymen, who had escaped, came up Choptank all in a fleet together. The alarm was at once spread from Cambridge, throughout the neighborhood, as it was at the same time along the bay shore of the County by the appearance of the British squadron, and the flame and smoke of vessels which they burnt. The time was now arrived

when it was necessary to *assume an attitude and an armour suited to the crisis*. The old Muskets, which had been lying by for years in ignoble idleness and rust, were rubbed up, and some new ones procured from the State Arsenal, all the uniform coats which had been formerly got for show were now put on for fight, every hat was garnished with a red muslin band, the drums beat to Arms, the American standard was unfurled; and Jimmy Madison, had he been here, would, at the same time that he might have been pleased with the patriotic ardor (for such it really was) displayed on the occasion, have received the execrations of nine-tenths of the men thus arrayed to defend their farms, their houses and other property. On the 13th the fleet got as far up the bay as the mouth of our river, and on the afternoon of the 14th, the day I received your letter, three of their vessels, viz. a 16 Gun Brig. one very large and one small armed schooner, advanced up Choptank and on thursday morning at 7 o'clock they were about two miles from Cambridge, directly opposite my farm at Horn's point, where they came to anchor. They remained in that reach of the river, a space of two or three miles, during thursday and friday, molested no one, made no attempt to land, never fired a gun, altho they saw the Banks of the river lined with militia, permitted Capt'n. R. H. Goldsborough, and some of his troop and other officers to dine undisturbed in the house of Major Danl. Martin, directly on the river side,

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## CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

and within half a mile of the Brig, and on Friday ev.g about sun-set got under way, and stood down the River, to the great Joy and relief of us all. On Saturday they left the river, and went up the bay after the rest of the Squadron. On the foll.g Sunday (Easter) I rode to the Mouth of the river, where I saw Admiral Warren's ship and several armed schooners, lying, some out in the bay, and others just at the entrance of the River. These also have since gone up the bay, and the position of the whole fleet now extends, as I understand, from opposite Annapolis to a little above the mouth of Patapsco, except a part which has gone up to Susquehanna to water. At the mouth of Choptank lies an Island of some extent and value, called Sharp's Island, owned by one Jacob Gibson, a violent democrat, a gentleman of considerable influence and celebrity in the election contests of Talbot County, and a neighbor of our friend R. H. G.'s This gentleman happened to be there, like Sancho on his Island, in the full possession and exercise of sovereign power, at the Time the British arrived. It was said he went for the purpose of removing his property to a place of safety. They landed and took possession of him and his Island, but without restraining his personal liberty, and saved him the trouble of removing his stock as they slaughtered and appropriated to the use of his Majesty's fleet such of his Beeves and Hogs and Sheep as were fit for that purpose. These however they honorably paid him for.

He remained there nearly a week, in which time he made an acquaintance with Admiral Warren, whom he represents as the most perfect Gentleman he ever saw. The Admiral invited him to take coffee with him on board of his ship which lay in the middle of the bay opposite the Island, on which occasion he represents himself to have been treated with the most polite attention and to have had much free political conversation with the Admiral and his officers, in the course of which he candidly informed them that he was a decided friend and supporter of the administration and advocate of the War; yet he says not a laugh or unpleasant remark was made during the whole time, except by one of the officers, who attributed the War to French influence over our councils. The Admiral perceiving Citizen Jacob's feelings to be wounded by this degrading imputation, immediately rebuked the officer for his offensive observation, and a free and easy conversation was again restored. The Admiral lamented the war, spoke of the reluctance of his Government to its continuance, assured him that no depredations would be committed on the Land, nor any molestation of personal property further than to procure provisions which they would honestly pay for; and that their object was to destroy the trade and all vessels of every description, which they intended to effect as far as was in their power. In return for the Admiral's politeness, the Citizen gave him an invitation to dine with him the next Day on his Island. The

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#### CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

invitation was accepted and he treated Admiral Warren to a barbecued pig dressed in the best style of our electioneering cookery. In fine, they got at last upon such terms of civility and goodwill that the Admiral gave him a protection, directed to all his Majesty's Ships and Vessels in the American and W. India stations for his Island and all the property of every sort upon it, another protection or license to remove his crop of wheat, which was on Hand, and which they did not touch, off to any place except Baltimore, and a passport for him to carry across the Bay a young lady from the western shore, then a visitor at his house, and also his Daughter, who wished to accompany her friend upon her return home. On this occasion the Admiral's Nephew, *an elegant young man*, observed in the true spirit of English gallantry, that he should watch with great anxiety for Mr Gibson's Boat, as he was determined to have himself the Honor of escorting the Ladies across the bay and seeing them safe on shore. Gibson, on his return home, came with his boat, which the British did not destroy but let him have again, to a little town called St. Michaels in Talbot County, where he found a body of militia keeping guard. He called them a pack of damned fools, told them there was no necessity for their wasting their time in that way, that the British did not mean to hurt them or their property, and they had better go home to work in their corn-fields. On the whole this singular adventure of the leading democrat of

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*Miami, FL 33161*

Talbot County, and his bringing home a considerable quantity of goods with him, is, politically, a very good thing. Some of the Democrats themselves have not hesitated to say that if a federalist had acted so he would have been tarred and feathered and his house pulled down. The British fleet consists of two or three 74's among which are the ships of Admirals Warren and Cockburn, several frigates and a considerable number of Brigs and Schooners, and a good many large barges on which they mount cannon. They have taken and destroyed, it is said, upon this expedition at least a hundred of our vessels. The nest of privateers is nearly broken up, and our bay trade has suffered extremely. Some of my poor neighbors are among the sufferers, having lost their vessels and with them the principal source of support to their families. Our intercourse with Baltimore is entirely cut off, and consequently all our means of procuring money. Should this blockade of this part of the bay continue three months longer, the Inhabitants of the Eastern shore will be in extreme distress both for supplies for their families, and money to purchase them with. The War physic is working very well. No man (not even the leading democrat) speaks in favor of the war. All express a wish for its termination. Most begin to reprobate its authors. If the taxes should be laid the work will be completed. There will be nothing among us but poverty and privation.

It was not my intention to take my family to

## CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

Washington this session; but our late alarms from the British, frightened as they have been by rumor, perhaps groundless, apprehensions from the negroes, will oblige me to take them with me when I leave home. I consider them safe, but they will not be satisfied without me. They regret extremely the loss they will sustain in the want of your society at Washington. It is not compliment, but sincerity, to assure you that we all set the highest value on your friendship, which it is my wish to cultivate by every interchange which our respective situations admit of. The Ladies desire to be remembered to you in the strongest terms of friendship and regard. If any of your particular friends should come to Washington, be good enough to make us acquainted with them. Knowing the value you set upon time and how unaccustomed you are to waste any portion of yours in excursions of amusement, it seems almost a useless formality to give you an invitation to visit us in Dorset. Yet I cannot help availing myself of this opportunity to say, that if at any time you should be disposed to seek, in a Journey and change of climate, a relaxation from the labor of study and professional occupation, it would afford us the highest pleasure to see you, and any of your friends with you at our old family mansion, in which I am now writing.

Our domestic history has afforded no occurrences since we parted at Washington, worth mentioning except this—Mrs. G. has added a fine little girl to the list of my objects of



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affection; and I have myself lately had an accidental fall, which has strained and injured all the muscles and sinews of my left knee to such a degree, as will probably attach to me for some months. The unwelcome dignity of a crutch, on which I am now compelled to hobble about, the pain and uneasy position in which I write will induce you to excuse this wretched scrawl altho' they may excite some surprise at my having continued it to such a length.

I have now no hope of seeing you this summer on the Banks of the Hudson. The uncertainty of the time Congress will continue in session forbids the adoption of any such plan. Besides, these times have so damaged my finances that I am as destitute of supplies for a long Journey, as the Government is of means to carry on the War.

With much esteem and regard, I am yours truly—

C. GOLDSBOROUGH

Another letter written the following spring from Washington said:

Washington, Feby. 4, 1814.

Dear Sir—

Upon my arrival here, which, owing to detention by the wedding, and subsequent bad weather, was not until the 25th of Jany. I had the pleasure to receive your friendly letter of the 13th of that month. Mr. and Mrs. Fitzhugh, with my daughter Eliza, followed a day or two after, and are now at Mr. Custis's, on the other

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## CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

side of the Potomac. I expect them to join us to-morrow or next day for the residue of the winter.

Mr. Clay has just left this place for New York, thence to embark for Gottenburg. The speculations of the various political Solomans here with respect to the result of this mighty mission are very different. Some calculate on peace, but the preponderance of opinion appears to be against it. There certainly never was before such a heterogeneous mass of character thrown together into one mission. They will certainly exhibit to the European world a strange specimen of American statesmen. Take out Bayard—and, what are they? For my own part, from such discordant materials I anticipate no good, no more than I do from the management of the little man, by whom they are selected and jumbled together and therefore shall not be disappointed in my own calculations if no peace is made. Bonaparte most probably will contrive at last to decide that point. Our persevering little King \* has managed at length to carry his point with regard to the mission to Sweden, and has done himself and his country the honor to invest a bankrupt merchant with the high character of a minister plenipotentiary. You will be perhaps surprised to hear, if you have not yet heard it, that this was effected in the Senate by the casting vote of a federal member of that body, and the very man too, who was at the last session Chairman of the

\* Meaning President Madison.

Committee to whom the subject of the Swedish mission was referred, and who was active and zealous then in defeating Russell's nomination Mr. Wells of Delaware has the honor now, if honor it be, of sanctioning by his casting vote a mission which he then aided in defeating, and of confirming the nomination of the very man, whom he then assisted to reject. I make no comments on this strange inconsistency, as I am not informed of his motives or reasons, further than to say that he is a man whom I have been accustomed to respect, but that his conduct in this instance has given great dissatisfaction to the federalists here generally.

Your friend Mr. Lovett made a very handsome speech the other day in vindication of the characters of General and Colonel Van Rensselaer. His friends were all gratified with the very handsome manner in which he acquitted himself. Do you ever see my worthy acquaintance Kiliaen K. Van Rensselaer? If you do, be so good as to offer my friendly remembrances to him.

We hear that Wilkinson has made a bold stroke in Canada, and taken 900 British troops, with a number of cannon, they were taking on for the vessels of war, they are building on the Lake. If this be true, it will probably revive in some degree the drooping spirits of the warsmen. Of an armistice I do not hear the most distant intimation. The whole talk is the policy and necessity of a vigorous and active

## CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

prosecution of the war. And as we cannot hear anything of the probable issue of the negotiation before May or June next, if so soon, I suppose we are to have the same scenes acted over again on the Chesapeake next spring, which harrassed and distressed us so much last summer. Whether after that time I shall have a house there to offer you the hospitalities of, is uncertain, as my situation is much exposed. But in whatever corner of the country, or in whatever hovel we may take shelter, my whole family would greet your appearance at its door as one of the most gratifying circumstances that could occur.

To my great mortification I have been obliged this winter to leave Mrs. G. and our children at home. The difficulty and risk of crossing the Bay with young children at this inclement season of the year, and the indispensable necessity of economizing these hard times are the reasons that have operated to produce this painful result to me, which is rendered more distressing by the intelligence that the typhous fever, the same which was so fatal in Albany and other towns in New York last winter, now rages in and about Cambridge with great severity. Many cases and deaths had occurred among the lower classes of people before I left home; but the accounts by my last letters are much more alarming.

Your engagements in the legislature I know will occupy your time very fully, yet I hope to hear from you occasionally and shall cer-

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tainly transmit you from hence anything that  
that may occur, which is worth notice.

Believe me,

Dear Sir

Sincerely yours,

C. GOLDSBOROUGH.

Harmanus Bleecker, Esq.,  
Albany, New York.

Mr. Goldsborough's last letter was written ten  
years later.

Cambridge, E. S. Md. July 23, 1824.

My dear Sir—

The fondness of our Southern folks for traveling to the North, and your location in the direct route to Ballstown, and Saratoga, have occasioned my frequently troubling you with letters of introduction. I have given none with more solicitude for their object than the one which I am now writing, and which is intended to introduce to your acquaintance, and to recommend to your notice and attention my nephew Robert Goldsborough Jr., the eldest son of Robert H. Goldsborough, whom you knew at Washington during the period that the political situation of Maryland allowed him to occupy a seat in the Senate of the United States. I have prevailed upon his father, as I have no son old enough for the purpose, to permit him to escort, on a tour to the North and East, my daughter Eliza, who has long wished to visit that country, and whose state of health seems to render such a tour advisable at

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this time. They will travel together as my children, the intimacy of his father and myself and our families having placed them rather in the relationship of brother and sister, than that of cousins. You will find Robert a most estimable young man, well trained in virtue, religion and science, but repressed by modesty and diffidence from making the most of his requirements and other merits. I am well assured that upon their arrival at Albany and the delivery of this letter, you will feel all the zeal of our former and long friendship in extending your attentions and kindness towards these my children; and therefore consider it unnecessary to say more for the purpose of securing to them your favor. Your aid and advice in regard to their mode of travelling from Albany to Saratoga, and their location in lodgings at the latter place will be very useful to them as young and inexperienced travellers, as it will also in relation to their subsequent journey to Boston. And any letters of introduction you may give them will confer an obligation both on them and myself. If they should remain long enough in Albany, I beg you will procure them the acquaintance of that most worthy and excellent man, the Patroon, and also of my friend Mr. Hopkins and their families, and such others of your friends as you may wish them to know. In particularising, I ought not to omit to mention our former congressional associate, Kiliaen Van Rensselaer. I am uncertain whether he now resides in

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Albany; if he does, his acquaintance would probably be useful as well as agreeable to my young friends, for you know that, at Washington, he used to be considered our Magnus Apollo in all matters relating to etiquette and boarding house comfort and economy. To the above named gentlemen I beg you to present my remembrances, with assurances of my respect and regard.

I have another favor to ask of you. My son William, whom you probably remember as a little fellow at Washington, having commenced his 17th year, is of an age, and has made sufficient progress in the common learning of our schools to be sent to college. Will you do me the kindness to give me your opinion in relation to the merits of the colleges of your State, in comparison with Yale and Harvard, for the completion of his education. He is intended for the profession of the Law, if he should make sufficient advances in learning, and manifest the possession of sufficient talents and industry, to authorize a hope of his succeeding in that profession. I propose sending him to college this fall, and hope he will be found qualified to join the junior class. In the meantime, I am endeavoring to obtain the advice and opinion of several of my friends, before I determine on what seminary to send him to.

I am, Dear Sir, with much esteem and regard

Your obed. Servt.

C. GOLDSBOROUGH

Harmanus Bleecker, Esq.

## CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

In the life of his father, Josiah Quincy, published in 1867, Edmund Quincy wrote:

The name of Mr. Bleecker reminds me that I should do my Father's name less than justice if I failed to speak of the friendship which sprang up between himself and that excellent gentleman during the Twelfth Congress. Harmanus Bleecker—best and most silent of men!—was of pure Dutch descent, and was one of the few of their race who could speak the language of the founders of New Netherland. . . . He was a lawyer by profession,—wise, learned, sagacious, the friend as well as the counsellor of his clients. 'He asked only how best to serve the poor', writes one of his numerous pupils,—among whom were numbered many of the most eminent men of New York,—'and it was a sight worth seeing to witness his consultations with the quaint old people of Albany, where family sorrows or fortune's smile or frown were all talked over in the good old language of the Netherlands.' He made no pretensions to forensic eloquence; but he was listened to by courts and juries with the respectful attention due to his knowledge, experience, and high character. No man, I am safe to say, ever had more friends or fewer enemies. My Father entertained for Mr. Bleecker a friendship as warm as it was sincere, and his regard was reciprocated with feelings of cordial affection and admiration. Mr. Bleecker made frequent visits to Boston, where he was always a welcome guest at many of the best houses,

HARMANUS BLEECKER

and at none more welcome than our own. In this way the old intimacy was kept alive, and made an exception to almost all my Father's Washington friendships, which too generally had faded out through the influences of time and separation.

The five letters that follow are from Josiah Quincy and show the character of his friendship with Harmanus Bleecker.

Quincy, 2 July, 1820

My dear Sir :

My two eldest daughters are about to pass through Albany, on a visit to the Falls of Niagara. They are under the protection of the Hon. Edward Dowse and lady and their sister (Mrs Shaw). These ladies are my maternal aunts.

Their residence in Albany will be but for a single day, or two. As they will feel the natural curiosity of strangers to see the interesting points of your city, I ask the favor of that kindness from your hands.

Mr Dowse is a member of Congress from this vicinity. I should rather say was—for since his return, from the last session, he has sent in his resignation in disgust at a life in Washington. He is a gentleman of a most excellent heart, and a highly cultivated understanding.

It gives me great pleasure to avail myself of

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this opportunity of expressing to you the very sincere respect with which I am

Your friend

(Signed) JOSIAH QUINCY

Hon. Harmanus Bleecker

Boston, 2, August, 1820.

My dear Sir,

I thank you for your favor of the 8th of July and for the kind attentions your politeness has extended to my children. They have written to us how much they were indebted to it during their short residence at Albany; and express great delight & gratification at their visit to that city.

The globe seems to run upon a very level surface. Time, now a days, spins along without either noise or apparent motion. A few literary and theological jostlings, one or two yawning paragraphs about rights, liberties, and constitutions, which nobody reads and nobody cares for: Lawyers, like pond fish, when the water dries away, their fins intersecting, and snapping at each other, for want of food and amusement. Merchants losing 25 per cent upon their voyage and counting it great gain that it is not fifty. Physicians looking like their own skeletons, there being neither colick, yellow fever nor dispepsy. In short every where a dead calm and living discontent. Nothing to find fault with, and yet nothing to make happy,—such seems to me the aspect of affairs here upon the seaboard. How it is in the interior, you know better than I. If we yankees were Englishmen,



HARMANUS BLEECKER

I take it for granted, we should hang, drown, or shoot ourselves out of life through mere wearisomeness. But being too cunning for that, we go on trading at a loss, busy with nothing to do, sharpening our wits, with no prospect of anything to cut with them; and some chance, in case nothing else occur, of cutting one another. How I envy your dutchmen! At such times they smoke and smoke and smoke—look wise and say nothing. Business enough to tend upon the pipe's bole;—they want nothing but to inhale and exhale, and knock out their ashes, and light again—while we yankees are never at ease unless we are rolling about and are ready to split with vexation when the turnings of things oblige us to sit still a little.

Well! God bless you, my dear friend and keep you as the Spaniards say a thousand years and make you as happy as any money making yankee or as any smoke making Dutchman.

So prays your friend

(Signed) JOSIAH QUINCY

Boston 6 May 1823.

My dear Sir,

As you have thought it worth while to compliment me on my office of mayor, I suppose, you will pardon my sending you the inclosed.

I should like to answer your letter, but I have nothing but drains, highways, streets, dirt and nuisances *et id genus omni* in my head.

My brain is no place for a neat, dutch, jurisprudent to associate with. As soon as it is swept  
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CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

and garnished and whitewashed you shall hear  
at large from most truly

Yr

JOSIAH QUINCY.

Harmanus Bleecker, Esq.,  
Albany.

Boston. 22 May 1824

My dear Sir:

My wife is with three of my children on a journey to the Falls for her health, and will be at Albany about the time this reaches you. I have taken the liberty to address to your care some letters for her. While she remains in your City, I need not commend her to your oversight. My only regret is that, my engagements will prevent me from taking you by the hand in her company. I shall hope that you will give her the best advice as to her journeyings. Relying always upon your kindness and in the interests we mutually take in whatever concerns the other.

With best wishes and respects

I am yours

JOSIAH QUINCY.

Harmanus Bleecker Esq.

I sent you the other day a slight exertion of mine, on a local relation not because I thought worth its conveyance, but because I love to bring myself to your memory.

My dear Sir,

I subjoin the clause of the act of our legislature, under which the mayor and aldermen widen streets.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

I have directed your name to be added to Wells and Tillys subscription for the 7th Vol of Burkes works. It is published and at your command if you will direct the publishers how it shall be sent to you.

Truly and respectfully

Yrs as ever

JOSIAH QUINCY.

7 March, 1827.

Sec. 3. and be it further enacted, That the mayor and aldermen of the said City of Boston for the time being, whenever, in their opinion, the safety and convenience of the inhabitants of said city shall require it shall be and they hereby are empowered to lay out or widen any street, lane, or alley of said city and for that purpose to remove any building or buildings of what nature soever; and the owner, or owners of such buildings shall be entitled to receive compensation for the damages, which he, or they may sustain by such removal, which damages shall be ascertained, determined and recovered in the way and manner pointed out in the act of this commonwealth entitled "an act directing the method of laying out highways."

The provision in the general law of the state for damages are first estimated by a Committee of the Court of Sessions—if party be dissatisfied by application to the Court of Sessions he has a jury to hear and formally determine.

Harmanus Bleecker Esq.

Counsellor at Law

Albany.

## CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

John Randolph evidently wrote his Albany friend eight letters, as I have found, besides the letter given below, seven outside covers of letters neatly endorsed in Mr. Bleecker's hand: "From John Randolph, Roanoke", but with no contents. By the disappearance of these seven letters much interesting material would seem to have been lost to judge by the one that remains and is here given, in full:

Roanoke Sept 6 1812

Dear Bleecker,

I owe you many thanks for your copious and very friendly letter of the 26th of August, which reached me only this morning. I cannot reply to your inquiries for I have been so little in the way of news that I have not yet seen the "Dull Letter" of which you make mention. The Albany Petitioners are very good in supposing themselves at all indebted to me; for in asserting their rights, I was only contending for my own. Tell such of them, however, as wished to see me in that antient City, that their disappointment cannot have exceeded my own. In these perilous and unexampled times it is difficult for an honest man to decide what ought to be done. Those who have personal views only to answer are exempted from this embarrassment. This is one of the many advantages which Rogues have over honest men, in this world at least. We have just heard of Hull's discomfiture; altho the news is not confirmed,

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it is but too probable. The whole Scheme of attacking Canada on its Northwest Frontier was of a piece with the rest of our sagacious plans. It is like an invasion of G. Britain by a descent on the Orkneys. He could not budge a foot without interposing Lake Erie and Ontario between himself and his supplies. It was an expedition for a flock of wild geese, not for unfeathered, two-legged creatures.

I cannot trust my pen on the subject of the Baltimore Mobs. I am sorry to find that the apathy, which I had thought was confined to Virginia, is epidemic—if you will pardon the Bull, and yet I should suppose that we had some cause to feel. In an adjoining county, the Sheriff says, that he shall be obliged to distrain for the *State Taxes*, and that there will not be found purchasers for the wretched chattels which he must be compelled to seize. And yet this very county, one of Mr Spolson's district, will probably support that gentleman, or some other politician, *ejusdem farinae*. Across the river, in Halifax, the largest and wealthiest county south of James River, and perhaps in the whole state, the Magistrates, at the last quarterly term (August) refused to render judgments; on the plea, that while the debtor would be deprived of his property, the creditor would not recover any portion of his claim: the whole proceeds of sale (such is the dearth of money) not being more than sufficient to pay the charges of the Sheriff, Clerk &c: This decision was given by men of large property, them-

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## CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

selves the chief creditors of the county. You may judge, by this, of our hopeful condition. Halifax is represented by Mr. Clay who has finished his Congressional career. You will observe that the jurisdiction of these County Courts is unlimited in law and equity and almost the whole civil business of the State is transacted by these Tribunals. The Magistrates are men of consideration who fill their own vacancies, and are perhaps the most independent judiciary in America. No change of politics can affect that body, to which every man of property and note in the several counties is attached. They appoint the Sheriffs and all the militia officers under the grade of Brigadier General; and lay the county levy for support of Bridges, poor, etc. In fact, they constitute the virtual executive and judicial powers of the State; and to this singular institution we owe much of the stability of our system. The shrievalty is possessed by them in turn. It does not vacate, but only suspends, *pro hac vice*, their seat on the Bench. Add to this two members annually elected from each county (the magistrates are eligible, and most frequently elected) by *Freeholders* of 50 acres of land; a Senate of 24, elected for four years, and divided into four classes, and you have an idea of our government. As to our governors and council they *commission* whom the county wants, or the assembly appoint, including every officer in the state; and have the power of pardon for criminal offences. Our supreme judges, attor-



HARMANUS BLEECKER

ney-general, treasurer,\* and general officers of the militia are elected by joint ballot of the two Houses of Assembly.

You see how much I am put to it to make out a letter, when I send you a transcript of our constitution.

Adieu! dear Bleeker—we shall soon meet again on the “Blasted Heath”, misnamed the “City of Washington”. Believe me with every good wish, very truly

Yours

JOHN RANDOLPH of Roanoke

Harmanus Bleeker Esq.

\* This officer annually. The rest during good behaviour.

Mr. Bleeker's admiration for John Randolph was so great that he employed a Mr. Wood to paint a portrait of this famous American, which portrait hung for years in the parlor of his Albany house. He counted it among his treasures and at his death asked that it might go to John Randolph's native state. It now hangs in the State Library at Richmond, Virginia.

The three letters following relate to this portrait, the first being written from Philadelphia:

Dr Sir,

Mr Randolph is sitting for his picture for Mr Delaplaine and has promised to sit for an

## CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

original one for you and Mr Wood is engaged in the execution of it, with a promise to have it correctly done—it's to be an original—an original if a good likeness must be considered much more valuable than a copy—I shall give you information when completed and sent on to Mr Sedgwick.

Sincerely and truly yours,

G. FAIRMAN

11th Dec. 1814

Harmanus Bleecker Esq.

Albany October 8. 1852.

Sir,

The will of the late Harmanus Bleecker of this City contained the following bequest;

“I give my portrait of the late John Randolph, painted on canvas, to the State of Virginia.”

Mr. Bleecker served in Congress from this district about forty years ago, at which time I believe he formed an acquaintance with Mr. Randolph which ripened into a cordial intimacy between them terminated only by the death of the latter.

When Mr. Bleecker's widow left this country a few months since for Holland (her fatherland) I undertook at her request the duty of sending to your Excellency the portrait referred to. It left by express yesterday, carefully boxed and directed to you, and I trust it will arrive safely. The inscription, “To the State of

HARMANUS BLEECKER

Virginia from Harmanus Bleecker'' has been placed on the frame at my suggestion.

As Mr. Bleecker considered this portrait to be a very faithful likeness of Mr. Randolph, at the time it was painted, I hope it may prove of interest to your State as a memorial of one of its most distinguished sons.

I have the honor to be  
With great respect  
Yours etc. etc.

JOHN V. L. PRUYN

To his Excellency the  
Governor of the State of Virginia.

Executive Department,  
Richmond, Va.  
Oct. 16, 1852.

Sir,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 8 inst, and to inform you of the safe arrival of the fine portrait of the late John Randolph—bequeathed, as you are pleased to inform me, by the late Harmanus Bleecker to the State of Virginia, as a testimony, doubtless, of his attachment to one of her highly gifted sons.

I beg leave to assure you that this gift cannot fail to be of interest to, and highly prized by Virginia. The inscription you were pleased to have placed upon the frame is very appropriate, and for it you will please receive my thanks.

At the meeting of the State Legislature in November next, it will afford me pleasure to  
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present to them this portrait, to be placed where, in their judgment, shall seem best.

Very respectfully,

Your Obt. Servant,

JOS. JOHNSON.

Jno. V. L. Pruyn Esq.

Albany, N. Y.

Just before Mr. Bleecker returned home, his former law student, John Rodman, again wrote him, this time from New York, saying:

New York 15th February 1813

My dear Sir,

I did indeed intend to make a visit to Washington this winter, but have now given it up. Some little professional business and the translation of the codes with which I am going on, do not allow me to spare the time. I fear, however, that my subscription list will be rather meager. I have been unlucky in not finding suitable persons to collect names in different parts of the U. S.—however, I am persuaded that the work will sell well, and when ready for the press, if there be not a sufficient number of subscribers to defray the expenses, I must make some arrangement with a Book seller for the publication of it.

Judge Cooper, of Pennsylvania, who has lately published a translation of the institutes of Justinian met with no sort of encouragement when soliciting for subscriptions, but now that the work is printed, it sells very fast. People

have been often imposed upon in subscriptions for publications, and they generally now say, "if I like the work when printed I will buy it"—not having the least idea of encouraging literary enterprise. The truth is, we have too many newspapers in this country,—they are the bane of literature, and I firmly believe of morals and good manners also. A man will not hesitate to subscribe for three or four daily papers, at ten dollars a year each, which, as to real news or information all contain nearly the same matter, when he would think it too much to spend half the amount in useful books for himself or his family.

I frequently hear from you through Mr. Bradish whom I see every day at Mrs. Keen's where I take my meals. He informs me that you have long since been heartily sick of Washington and long for the termination of the session. I thought you would have found this winter more agreeable than the last, as I am informed the society has been much better—but you have not enjoyed good health, and without that no place is agreeable but home. Our city has hitherto been very dull—but dull or gay it is the same to me for I go nowhere. I lead a most solitary, unsocial and I may say tiresome kind of life. Either I have changed myself very much, or the society of this place has, for really I never knew so little interest excited by the company of our ladies—and as to the men, they think and talk of nothing but their vile party politics. You are no doubt better informed than I am of the confusion and

## CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

misunderstandings among the Federalists and Clintonians at Albany. The re-appointment of DeWitt has given great dissatisfaction here. As soon as the news reached town, there was a meeting of some of the influential young men of the federal party called at which some spirited resolutions were adopted and more *spirited* speeches delivered. Maxwell the famous champion of the upper wards at elections was Chairman and VerPlanck Secretary. Anthon was there and spoke with great severity against the *coalition*. Some one said he would give five dollars to see Mr. Hoffman burnt in effigy, who is accused by a great many of being the author and supporter of the coalition. These young men support Radcliff and insist upon the removal of every Clintonian,—no doubt because many of them want their offices. What will be the result of all this I know not—but it clearly appears to me that Federalists when in power are full as likely to quarrel about the division of it as the democrats are—and I very much question whether they will all unite in the grand scheme of a Northern Confederacy to put down Southern influence.

I have read with great satisfaction your speech on the army bill, though I am very sorry to differ from you on the ground of the war and the necessity of continuing it till we obtain complete redress of our wrongs. I admire the frank, sensible and parliamentary manner in which you have treated the subject. I could have wished you had dwelt more upon the doctrine set up, of G. Britain, that a man has



not a right to expatriate himself—which appears to me cannot be defended upon any principle of reason or justice—it is a right inherent in our nature and is never surrendered to civil society. All the great writers on the law of nature and nations clearly lay it down that every man has the right, and that after withdrawing from the society where he was born, solemnly renouncing all allegiance to its government and entering into another, his native country has no claim upon him. Vattel particularly is explicit on this subject in the 19th Chapter of the 1st book you will find it ably discussed. Indeed it is the practice of all nations—whatever may be their municipal regulations—all naturalize foreigners—and recognize the right in other govts. to naturalize their subjects. There are now a great many Irishmen and Scotchmen in the Service of France some of whom have been taken by the English as prisoners when fighting against them and have been considered as lawful prisoners of war. It is absolutely impossible to refuse the right of expatriation without violating every principle of the law of nature and the universal principles of reason and justice—these are paramount to all municipal laws—which are binding only as long as people remain within their jurisdiction. If we give up this principle, we give up our independence.

Consider the effect it would have upon a very large proportion of our population. What would become of the property of your Gracies,  
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## CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

your Lenoxes, your Ogdens and thousands of others, were we to admit the English doctrine of non-expatriation. Every other nation would have an undoubted right to consider all these people as Englishmen, notwithstanding their naturalization, consequently in every war with England, whether we were neutral or not, would capture their property at Sea. We would have no sort of right to claim it as American—for surely if we admit that we have no right to claim the *persons* of our naturalized citizens when captured or seized on the high seas we can have no right to claim their property—if they are Englishmen, their property is English. At this moment there are claims to an immense amount by Archibald Gracie and Jonathan Ogden of this City, both native subjects of G. Britain, on the French Govt. for seizure and capture, being American citizens and their property American, and it has not yet been questioned that they really are American citizens. Once adopt the English doctrine which I am really astonished to see defended by the federalists, and the french Govt. would have an undoubted right to say these men are not Americans—you have admitted that they are not—and that your naturalization does not change their quality.

. . . But I beg pardon for this long letter and assure you of my sincere and lasting sentiments of affection and regard.

JNO. RODMAN

Honble Harmanus Bleecker

## FRIENDSHIPS AT HOME

**M**R. BLEECKER returned to Albany in 1813 hoping to devote himself once more to legal work with his partner Theodore Sedgwick. But he was soon again called upon to take public office and was elected to the State Assembly where he served during the sessions of 1814 and 1815. After 1815 he devoted himself to a large and profitable law practice. At first he continued to practice in association with his old friend and later—when Mr. Sedgwick decided on account of his health to go to New York—he took as his partner Peter Seton Henry.

Albany by this time was a center for eminent lawyers. Aaron Burr had appeared and disappeared, a brilliant but unstable member of the bar. Among those who had come to make Albany their home were: James Kent of Phillippi, New York, who became Chief Justice and then Chancellor; Ambrose Spencer of Salisbury, Connecticut, who, for many years, was Chief Justice of New York State; William L. Marcy, of Southbridge, Massachusetts; and Martin Van Buren and Benjamin F. Butler of Kinderhook. When Van Buren and Butler reached Albany in 1816—they had already formed a partnership—they took the

## FRIENDSHIPS AT HOME

law offices of Bleecker and Sedgwick, 109 State Street, when that firm moved to 64 State Street. All these men figured sooner or later in the judicial or political life of the state or nation. Van Buren, Marcy, and Butler were members of the so-called Albany Regency \* and served as members of the cabinets of various Presidents and the first two men became Governors of the State of New York. Van Buren had even a more brilliant career for he was elected successively State Senator, United States Senator, Vice President and finally President of the United States. But during the years that he called Albany his home he and Harmanus Bleecker met frequently, found much to enjoy in common and formed an enduring friendship. While in the United States Senate he wrote Bleecker as follows:

My dear Friend—

I am ashamed of myself for my remissness in what was due to our friendship & am gratified to find that your goodness has suggested my apology. I have shown your letter to Mr. Ridgeley. It gave him pleasure, & he desires to be remembered to you. Our session closes

\* The name given to a group of able Democrats which for 30 years exerted a powerful political influence in New York State. An incomplete list of the members includes Martin Van Buren, William L. Marcy, Benjamin F. Butler, Silas Wright, John A. Dix, Azariah Flagg, Edwin Croswell.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

in six days and we have yet everything to do. The West India Bill was under consideration yesterday and we rejected by a majority of nine the whole Bill reported by the Committee, with a view of introducing a substitute but adjourned before that substitute was agreed upon. The Administration have to say the least of it been very unfortunate in this affair and will find it very difficult to avoid the imputation of having trifled with a very valuable portion of our commerce. In the retaliatory measures, New York will have to be deprived of her cane trade. I spoke at some length upon the subject and was gratified by the declaration of very many of the Senators that they had not before understood the merits of the dispute. You may rest assured that the re-election of Mr. Adams is out of the question. This truth is rapidly making its way & showing itself among all classes here and not the least so with the Administration itself.

Make my best respects to my friend Peter R and thank him for me for his conduct in relation to the Senate election. Have the goodness also to remember me to the Misses Bridgen who are I hope *both* well. I leave here immediately after adjournment for Charleston, S. C. in company with Major Hamilton, and will not be home before about the middle of April.

Yours truly,

M. V. BUREN

Mr. Bleecker

W. Feby 25—1827

In the invigorating companionship of such a group of distinguished fellow-lawyers, pleasant indeed must Bleecker have found life in Albany during the next twenty-five years. His successful career in Congress had increased his distinction at home and elsewhere and had added many more to his already large circle of friends. His opinions were sought and regarded. In both his business and social contacts he had dignity of manner and sincerity of heart and he always took time to be courteous. He honored and enjoyed his friends. He had the gallant way of the period with women, many of whom found him unusually charming. In those days, Albany society was a small and stately affair. The occasional long and solemn dinners, the tranquil tea-drinking parties, bringing old and young together, have a certain attraction restful now to think about. We can easily imagine Harmanus Bleecker's elegant figure bowing over the tea cups handled by many happy and well-mannered women in some of the old Albany homes. In his gentle fashion, Bleecker had a genius for friendship and his friends far and wide, knowing his integrity and kindness, were many and faithful. "I can only say Albany sincerely loves you", wrote James Kane to Harmanus Bleecker when in Congress. "Whatever changes



you may meet with, you will find none in the sincere friendship of Maria Bleecker", was the ending to a letter from one of the most interesting of the younger women of Albany, sent him after he had gone to Holland. Josiah Quincy wrote from Boston in 1824: "I sent you the other day a slight exertion of mine on a local relation . . . because I love to bring myself to your memory." One hundred years ago, when Harmanus Bleecker, in unhurried fashion, walked along the few streets of Albany, he was sure to meet, between his office and home, many interesting and distinguished men, some of whom, like himself, had been born and brought up in the old city.

He must often have stopped to shake the hand of Abraham Van Vechten of the Albany Bar, and of Stephen Van Rensselaer of the Manor and have lingered for friendly talk with Chancellor Lansing and Peter and Leonard Gansevoort, and with the generous citizen James Stevenson, who, like Bleecker, shed a delightful influence on the social life of Albany. Bleecker's courteous greeting must often have been given to his friends, the Kanes, Isaiah Townsend, James Caldwell and Erastus Corning, all great merchants of the town; to Governor DeWitt Clinton, and to the sturdy democrat Silas Wright, one day himself to become Governor of the State.



ALBANY FROM ACROSS THE HUDSON, 1830



## FRIENDSHIPS AT HOME

And it was surely bestowed on those who, by their achievements in the fields of science and art, have added a greatness that cannot die to their city's history.

Up and down State and Market, Pearl and Court Streets they passed—between office and home: Simeon DeWitt, the Surveyor General, William Duer, soon to become President of Columbia College; Philip Hooker, already bringing variety and added beauty to Albany's architecture; Theodric Romeyn Beck, the distinguished principal of the Boys' Academy; Joseph Henry, a teacher there, working, in spare hours, on his electric experiments; Edwin Crosswell of *The Argus*, and Thurlow Weed of *The Evening Journal*, both brilliant editors. In all, a wonderful procession of lawyers, statesmen, educators, men of affairs!

What interest and dignity they gave by their presence to the life of those quiet streets!

On July 1, 1825, on his second journey to the United States, General Lafayette made his third visit to Albany. He came by way of Vermont accompanied by its Governor and a military escort from Troy and put up at Crittenden's Hotel, later known as Congress Hall.\*

\* This building stood on the south side of Washington Avenue opposite Park Place, where is now the great flight of steps to the Capitol.

#### HARMANUS BLEECKER

Harmanus Bleecker, active in all matters, was one of the committee of six to receive the General and to arrange a large dinner in his honor. This dinner was given at four o'clock in the afternoon in the Capitol and Elias Kane, the brother of James Kane, presided. Many Albany men were present and among the out-of-town guests were Justices Story and Daniel Webster, both of whom proposed toasts and made speeches. Indeed, Webster gave two toasts; one, "The State of New York", the other, "The Ancient and Hospitable City of Albany where General Lafayette found his *Headquarters* in 1778 and where men of his principle find *Good Quarters* at all times."

Two years later, at the Mansion House, another great dinner was given to meet the Minister of the Netherlands to the United States, Baron Huygens, and this time it was Harmanus Bleecker who presided. His speech of welcome was made in Dutch and the representative of the Netherlands replied in the same language. How Bleecker's heart must have warmed to such an occasion!

And also to another of like sort when in 1835 Prince Hendrik of the Netherlands, a younger son of King Willem II, and an uncle of Queen Wilhelmina, came to Albany to attend a

#### FRIENDSHIPS AT HOME

dinner arranged for him by the St. Nicholas Society. He was, at the time, a midshipman of fifteen on his third long cruise. With him were some of the officers from the two Dutch men-of-war, "De Maas" and "Snelheid", which were lying in the harbor of New York. Chevalier Martini, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Netherlands to the United States, traveled from Washington to Albany in order to be present, and Governor Marcy and Mayor Corning were also at the dinner. The venerable President of the Society, Abraham Van Vechten, presided, assisted by General Soloman Van Rensselaer and Harmanus Bleecker. Mr. Bleecker gave as his toast: "Dutch industry and enterprise, which converted standing pools and lakes into fat meadows, and made one of the smallest countries in Europe one of the greatest in wealth and commerce."

The *Albany Argus* of September 15, 1835, gave an account of this dinner and said that the warmth and feeling displayed was shown by the fact that no less than forty-nine toasts were drunk!

Legal business sometimes took Mr. Bleecker to Boston where he had the pleasure of seeing his old friend Josiah Quincy, his former colleague in Congress.



HARMANUS BLEECKER

During one of these visits Mr. Quincy wrote him at Mrs. Delano's on Beacon Street:

President Adams told me today that he would dine with me en famille at half past two. Will you and your friend Delavan join him at my table? I shall dine precisely at that hour on account of my convention engagements.

And Edward Everett wrote:

If you and Mr. Delavan will have the goodness to ask for me on arriving at Mrs. Pratt's this evening, I will be on hand to introduce you. I hope you do not consider your invitation inadequate without a note. I told Mrs. Pratt that you would not expect that ceremony, peculiar to our little town—or at least unknown abroad—when an introduction by a common friend with permission is the most approved mode in which a stranger can attend a party.

Another of Bleecker's New England friends was Jared Sparks, the eminent professor at Harvard College. At one time he wrote from Boston:

It would seem as if I should never cease troubling you. I am exceedingly desirous of consulting a work entitled 'Saure's Account of Billings Expedition in Siberia'. There is not a copy of it in any of our libraries. I saw one in the library at the State House in Albany. Will you do me the favor to send it to me for a  
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## FRIENDSHIPS AT HOME

few days? Please write me at the same time by mail, telling me by what stage it comes, the day, and the place in Boston at which the stage stops. Let the book be directed to me at the office of the North American Review, 74 Washington Street. I beg you will send it as soon as possible.

Thus did New England, even as early as 1825, turn for literary aid to Dutch New York!

## THE ST. NICHOLAS FEAST

**H**ARMANUS BLEECKER was not only an able lawyer and a just citizen, faithful to his immediate duties, but he delighted also in preserving the past in order that it might speak to the present. He therefore took every occasion to foster and to keep alive in Albany the memory of Dutch customs.

He was always increasing his knowledge of the language and literature of the Netherlands and was able to speak and read the purest Dutch—Bible Dutch—with fluency. Indeed, he was known, one hundred years ago, as the best Dutch scholar in the city.\* The St. Nicholas Benevolent Society\*\* counted him among its members and a very active one he was in the celebration in Albany each year of the feast of St. Nicholas, which took place either on the day itself, or, as in the Netherlands, on the eve of the day, December 5th. He knew that Christmas Day in the mother country was dedicated to religious observances, while the Eve of St. Nicholas Day was peculiarly the time for the giving of presents to the children, and the

\* Munsell's Annals of Albany.

\*\* Founded with the object not only of keeping the feast of St. Nicholas, but also of affording relief to those of Dutch descent, who were poor and in need of help.

## THE ST. NICHOLAS FEAST

coming together of families. He felt that, in honoring St. Nicholas's Eve every year, there was kept stronger the tie that bound the Dutch of Albany to the Netherlands.

Among his papers there are a number relating to the details of the Albany celebration, as for many years he was a vice-president and then a president of the Society. Some days beforehand, formal invitations to a St. Nicholas Feast were sent out to distinguished men in Albany and elsewhere. If anyone was unable to accept, it was understood he would suggest a toast to be offered for him on the occasion. At first men of Dutch descent only were expected, but, as the years passed, others, Dutch through marriage, were included; and, finally, distinguished citizens, whether of Dutch ancestry or not, were invited.

The feast or supper was held in a large room of one of the hotels of the city. The Mansion House on State Street, later the home of the first Erastus Corning, and now the Albany Club; Congress Hall, which stood on the Washington Avenue side of Capitol Park; and Stanwix Hall on Market Street, now Broadway, seem to have been the favorite places for the gathering.

The following letters are given which were sent to the secretary of the Society, declining invita-

HARMANUS BLEECKER

tions for the St. Nicholas Feasts of 1829, 1835, and 1838, and by reading them the spirit of the occasion may more easily be understood.

Manor House Dec. 5th 1835

Dear Sir

Being prevented unexpectedly from attending our Anniversary dinner, I ask the favor of you to offer the enclosed toast.

Yours truly

S. VAN RENSSELAER

The Hon. A. Van Vechten

President St. Nicholas

Society

Holland rescued from the Sea by Dutch industry and perseverance,—from Foreign usurpation by Dutch Patriotism and unanimity. We honor our Brethren of that Land which they may emphatically call their own.

Washington Dec. 1, 1836

Gentlemen;

I regret exceedingly that my public duties will not permit me to avail myself of your polite invitation for the 6th inst. I beg you however to be assured that no one can cherish a more lively solicitude for the success of your society, and the individual welfare of its members than I do. Have the goodness to offer the assured sentiment to the company in my name, and believe me with kind respect

Your friend and

Obedient Servt.

M. VAN BUREN

THE ST. NICHOLAS FEAST

To Messrs.

Garrett W. Ryckman

George Brinckerhoff

John Van Buren

Henry Bleecker Jr.

John C. Yates

Ever increasing prosperity to the good City  
of Albany, and health and happiness to its  
inhabitants.

New York 2nd Dec. 1836.

Gentlemen;

I have this moment received your invitation  
in behalf of the Society of St. Nicholas, to par-  
ticipate in their anniversary Festival on the  
sixth instant. Descended as I am both in the  
male and female line, from ancestors who came  
originally from Holland, and being proud of  
such descent, it gives me very sensible pleasure  
to find myself noticed in this friendly manner  
by a Society instituted for the purpose of per-  
petuating the recollections of Old Vaterland,  
and it would gratify me exceedingly if I could  
partake in your celebration. But domestic, and  
other causes, prevent my enjoying that pleasure,  
and I must content myself with offering my  
hearty wishes for the prosperity and happiness  
of the worthy members of the Society of St.  
Nicholas.

I am with the highest respect

Gentlemen Your obliged Servant

J. K. PAULDING.\*

\*The author of "The Dutchman's Fireside."



HARMANUS BLEECKER

Messrs.

G. W. Ryckman  
George Brinckerhoff  
John Van Buren  
Henry Bleecker Jr.  
Jno. C. Yates

Albany 5th Dec. 1835

Gentlemen;

I have had the honor to receive the invitation of the managers of the St. Nicholas Society of Albany to attend its anniversary festival this evening and regret that my engagements compel me to decline it. The occasion is well calculated to call up a train of recollections and reflections dear to the Descendants from a Dutch Ancestry and scarcely less so to those united with them by the ties of friendship and daily social intercourse. I should most cheerfully avail myself of the opportunity presented to me by your kindness to participate in your festivities this evening if circumstances permitted me to do so.

I am with sincere respect

Your Obedient Servant

W. L. MARCY

To Messrs.

Wm. H. Fondy }  
L. A. Livingston } Committee

State Street, Dec. 5, 1835.

Gentlemen

I regret that I am prevented, by the state of my health, from accepting your invitation to  
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## THE ST. NICHOLAS FEAST

attend the St. Nicholas celebration this evening; and from participating in the pleasures of an anniversary that is associated with the best feelings of patriotism and the most agreeable recollections of Social enjoyment. Permit me to propose a toast; and to subscribe myself,

Very respectfully

Your Ob' Serv.

(Signed) ERASTUS CORNING

### *The City of Amsterdam*

Renowned throughout the world for its wealth, its commerce, its liberal institutions, and its monuments of art. If we may not hope to equal these, may we emulate the Spirit of enterprise and perseverance, which, conquering every obstacle of nature, accomplished such vast results.

New York Dec. 2nd, 1837

The President of the St. Nicholas Society of New York thanks the Managers of the St. Nicholas Benevolent Society of Albany for their kind invitation to him to meet their Society at the next Anniversary Festival of our Patron saint at Albany. Nothing but the imperative duty of presiding at a similar festival in this city at the same time could prevent him from accepting this invitation. Unable on that account to be present with you, he begs leave to inform you that it is his intention to offer from the chair at the festival of St. Nicholas in this city precisely at eight in the evening the subjoined *Toast* which he requests

you then to communicate to the sons of St. Nicholas assembled at Albany whom he prays to remember their New York brethren with good wishes and kind recollections.

Messrs. R. P. Staats  
R. H. Pruyn  
B. Van Rensselaer

“The Sons of St. Nicholas at Albany, faithful and zealous guardians of the good old habits and the fair fame of their Dutch Ancestors; they have proved in their Van Vechtens, their Van Rensselaers, their Bleeckers and other honored names that they can rival the wisdom and the worth which they venerate.”

The bills of fare for these suppers were always long; indeed, it is impossible in these days of lighter eating, to imagine people being able to undertake and enjoy so heavy a meal. The menu was divided into two parts, the Dutch dishes being placed in one division, called “National Dishes”, and the dishes with English names in another division called “Ordinary Dishes”.

Later, in 1838, the word “supper” was no longer used, and the meal was called a dinner and an attempt made to arrange the food in courses. Looking over the bill of fare, we find that the famous *olykoek* (oil cake) is about all that remains familiar to us now in the long list of “National

# AMERICAN HOTEL.

## BILL OF FARE

FOR THE

ST. SPIROLOAN SUPPER.

6th December, 1836.

Suppaan en Melk,  
Hoofd Kaas,  
Zult,  
Hokjes en Pootjes,  
Kool-Slaa,—Heet en Koud,  
Rolletjes,  
Werst,  
Gefruyt-Pens,  
Oli-Kookies,  
Krullijes,

National Dishes.

Saddles of Mutton,  
Roast Beef,  
Alamode Beef,  
Rounds of Beef,  
Boiled Tongue,  
Stuffed Legs of Veal,  
Turkies Roasted,  
Geese, do.  
Ducks, do.  
Chickens, do.  
Turkies Boiled,—with Oysters,  
Chickens, do. do.  
Hams boiled in Champagne,  
Chicken Pies,  
Oyster Pies,  
Oysters Fried,  
Oysters Stewed,  
Oysters Pickled,  
Clams, do.

Ordinary Dishes.

### GAME.

Venison Steaks,	Saddles of Venison,
Brant,	Partridges,
Widgeons,	Quails,
Black Ducks,	Red Heads,
Broad Bills,	

### DESSERT.

Pies, Tarts, Fruits, &c.



## THE ST. NICHOLAS FEAST

Dishes'', so entirely have Dutch cookery and customs vanished.

After 1850, although the St. Nicholas Benevolent Society held an annual meeting for the election of officers, there is no mention in Munsell's *Annals* of any St. Nicholas gathering. Possibly the ardor for these suppers cooled because of the absence of one of their chief supporters, for Mr. Bleecker died in 1849. He carried his enthusiasm for the yearly celebration into his life at the Hague, and in some of the letters written to Albany friends, during his six years in Europe, he spoke often with affection of the event, wishing that he might be present to take part in it with his old friends.

To show how large a place, for thirty years, the feast held in the life of Albany, this account, somewhat abridged, from the *Albany Gazette* of December 13, 1833, is printed.

### ST. NICHOLAS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY OF THE CITY OF ALBANY

The anniversary festival of this society was celebrated on the evening of the 6th inst., at the large room of Stanwix Hall—the splendid and substantial building recently erected by the Messrs. Gansevoort.

The room was beautifully decorated with various appropriate banners, devices, festoons



## HARMANUS BLEECKER

and other ornaments, in which Orange was the predominant color. Through the politeness of several gentlemen, many portraits of distinguished individuals of the olden time of Dutch descent, were loaned for the occasion, and added much to the interest of the decorations. Among them were those of Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, the second Patroon; Philip Livingston, one of the signers of the declaration of Independence; Abraham Yates, formerly Mayor of the city; and Gen. Abraham Ten Broeck.

Opposite the centre panel of the gallery, the portrait of Gen. Gansevoort, the defender of Fort Stanwix, was suspended, with that of his brother Judge Gansevoort on the one side, and Col. Varick on the other. Busts of various distinguished individuals were also placed in appropriate situations about the room. Among others, were those of Pierre Van Cortlandt, Alexander Hamilton, De Witt Clinton, and John V. Henry. Several fine paintings and engravings from the collection of John Meads, Esq., were also politely loaned by him for the occasion; and under the guidance of his established and excellent taste the decorations were arranged.

The room was opened in the afternoon for the reception of visitors, and many hundreds of ladies and gentlemen took the opportunity of viewing the table and decorations.

At 8 o'clock the members of the society, together with their guests, sat down to a table most sumptuously prepared.

The bill of fare, in addition to the national  
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## THE ST. NICHOLAS FEAST

dishes, contained all that could be wished or desired, and did honor to the host and the occasion.

The venerable Abraham Van Vechten, Esq., President of the society, presided at the table, assisted by Harmanus Bleecker, Esq., as 1st Vice President, Jacob Ten Eyck, Esq., as 2nd Vice President, and Peter Gansevoort, Esq., as 3d Vice President. Among the guests were Rutger B. Huygens, late Chargé of his Majesty the King of the Netherlands to this country; his Excellency Gov. Marcy; Lieut. Gov. Tracy; the Mayor; Gen. Pierre Van Cortland of Westchester county; Gerrit Van Schoonhoven, Esq., of Waterford; S. F. B. Morse, Esq., President of the Academy of Design; Rensselaer Schuyler and Herman Gansevoort Esqrs., of Saratoga county.

After the removal of the various courses, the following toasts were drunk:

### STANDING TOASTS.

- I. Netherland—Our father-land.  
Auld Lang Syne.
- II. The President of the United States.  
Hail Columbia.
- III. The King of the Netherlands—True to his great name; true to his illustrious house; true to a patriotic people.  
God save the King.  
(Drunk with great enthusiasm)
- IV. The memory of William the first, Prince of Orange—Tolerant in an age of

HARMANUS BLEECKER

bigotry; liberal, when all around were tyrants.

Marseilles Hymn.

- V. The memory of Grotius—An illustrious example of moral and intellectual power; a private individual in adversity and in exile, he gave law to the law-givers of Christendom.

Roslin Castle.

- VI. The memory of the Rev. Dr. Eilardus Westerlo—The learned and pious man; the dignified and affectionate Pastor.

Adeste fideles.

- VII. The Schoolmaster—The mighty conqueror, whose march no holy or unholy alliance can oppose.

Flow on thou shining River.

VOLUNTEER TOASTS.

By the President. Baron Huygens, the late resident Minister in the United States, of a nation we delight to honor—A gentleman whose official conduct and private virtues, entitle him to our profound respect.

(This toast was drunk with great applause.)

By the First Vice President, Harmanus Bleecker, Esq. Massachusetts—A republic, founded on board of "the May-Flower", in 1620, and yet exhibiting unsurpassed happiness, and the complete dominion of law and order.

By the Second Vice President, Jacob Ten Eyck, Esq. Our guest, Rutger B. Huygens, late Chargé of the Netherlands—For his own



LOOKING DOWN STATE STREET, ALBANY, 1805

*Harmanus Bleecker was baptized in the Dutch Church at the foot of the street*



## THE ST. NICHOLAS FEAST

sake, for his father's sake, we are gratified that this festival is distinguished by his presence.

(After the long continued cheering with which this toast was received, had subsided, Mr. Huygens rose and addressed the company in Dutch.)

. . . It is only a short time ago, that one of your distinguished men was an eye witness of the value which my countrymen attach to the expressions of regard for Holland, which arose from your bosoms. I speak of that enlightened statesman who has experienced how much Holland loves to acknowledge in her descendants those virtues which have adorned their ancestors; and gratifying has it been for my countrymen to see that one of New Netherland's favorite sons, who was during a short time considered by them as the worthy representative of New Netherland, has been elevated to the high station which he occupies, the second office in the gift of a free people.\*

And do I not see in the midst of you, the venerable and meritorious patriot, the companion and friend of Washington, and whose name recalls to memory one of the greatest Statesmen of his age? \*\* A statesman of whom Burnet said that Holland had never possessed, in the administration of justice, in the protection of commerce, in the support of their fleets, a greater Minister. A man to whom William III

\* Martin Van Buren, Vice-President of the United States.

\*\* Simeon De Witt, Surveyor General of the State of New York.



HARMANUS BLEECKER

gave the praise that he was one of the greatest men of his age, and had faithfully served his country.

Did I not fear to wound your modesty, and encroach too much upon your time it would afford me heartfelt satisfaction, to express for several names a merited homage, and I should certainly not refrain from expressing my feelings with regard to one of your number who to many superior qualities, unites in particular such a praiseworthy study and knowledge of the language and history of our fatherland.\* I feel that I must leave such a task to more able hands.

. . . . .

But when the hour of trial came the Netherlander proved that the blood of his ancestors flowed in his veins. There he stands on the same frontiers which were wrested from the grasp of the tyrant at the end of the 16th century. There he stands with arms in hand, extorting by his courage and calmness, by his unalterable obedience to discipline, the esteem and respect of his very enemies. There he stands headed by the noble sons of Orange, who are always found in the first ranks, wherever honor, virtue and courage are to be displayed—the illustrious progeny of heroes whose names are inseparable, and whose great actions fill the pages of our history.

Could we find, gentlemen, a more striking example of the value and efficacy of the institu-

\* Harmanus Bleecker, 1st Vice-President of the Society.  
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## THE ST. NICHOLAS FEAST

tions, customs and manners of the land of our ancestry, than to look at their durability? To whatever quarter of the Globe, which the Hollander has trod we turn our eyes, there, we still perceive, the benign influence of those principles and virtues, which my countrymen rejoice to see so deeply rooted in New Netherland.

. . . . .

Permit me, gentlemen, to offer you as a sentiment—

The St. Nicholas Benevolent Society of Albany—Whose members throw, by their patriotic exertions, a new splendor upon the virtues of a glorious ancestry. May the band of brotherly love between children of the same family connect them closer and closer every day.

By Volkert P. Douw, Treasurer of the Society. May the ebbings of our treasury be replenished by floods of liberality; and our dollars, in the cause of benevolence, be kept as bright as our grandmother's copper kettles.

(The Secretary of the Society, John V. L. Pruyn, being called upon by the President for a toast, accompanied the same with the following remarks.)

Mr. President—

It cannot but be matter of congratulation to witness so many assembled, who have come up to this festival to renew the recollections of the land of their forefathers. It tells us that the fellowship of kindred feeling still exists among the descendants of the adventurous men who

laid the foundations of this ancient city, and notwithstanding the lapse of more than two centuries and the wonderful changes wrought by time and the hands of man, we meet this evening to claim our original birthright, and testify the love we bear for the memory and the land of our ancestors. We come to this festival, I trust, with a proper and laudable spirit—not with a local or narrow feeling; not with prejudices and conceits; not as a band of men distinct and divided from the world around us, but as sons to render the homage of our respect and gratitude to a parent—as men to testify our admiration for what is great and good. The land of our nativity, it is true, claims our paramount allegiance, and we most cheerfully yield it; but while we feel and acknowledge this claim to its fullest extent we cannot forget our original ancestry, and that we meet not only as American freemen, but as sons of the freemen of Holland, and feel that we have a double reason to rejoice.

. . . . .

To keep alive a friendly feeling between the two countries—to induce its members to cherish with affection, the recollection of Holland, and her History, is the great aim of this Society; and may we not hope that it will succeed? Yes, it will, it must! I cannot for a moment believe, when I see collected around me, so many, with whose feelings and partialities, I can claim at least some little acquaintance, that they will suffer such an undertaking to sink. No! let

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## THE ST. NICHOLAS FEAST

it pass down to our children, and from them, to the most distant posterity, heightening in feeling, and increasing in number, as time rolls on. Let us hope, that when we shall have passed from this stage of existence, others will crowd in to fill our places, and that a long succession of years, yet to come, shall witness the hearty and grateful celebration, of the Anniversary of St. Nicholas.

I give you, Sir, as a sentiment,

THE FESTIVAL OF ST. NICHOLAS.—A link connecting the past with the present—may it extend to the future.

Richard V. De Witt, Chairman of the Board of Managers, then read a letter from Mr. Adrian Martini, Chargé d’Affaires of His Majesty, the King of the Netherlands (at Washington), in reply to an invitation to attend the Anniversary Festival. . . .

Dear Sir—

It is with deep feelings of regret that I find it impossible to accept the invitation. . . . I beg leave to offer the subjoined toast: “The virtue, firmness and constancy of our Dutch ancestors and of the Williams of Orange.” Your friend, Adr. Martini. (Mr. Martini’s toast was then drunk.)

Mr. DeWitt then gave as a sentiment the health of Adrian Martini, the representative of the King of Holland to the United States.

A letter was then read from J. C. Zimmerman, Esq., Consul of the Netherlands at New

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York, in reply to a similar invitation—apologizing for his absence, and offering the following toast, which was drunk:

The Lion of the Netherlands, and the Eagle of the United States of America—Noble emblems of both Nations—Honor and Independence.

Dr. Herman Wendell, one of the Managers, then proposed the health of Mr. Zimmerman, which was drunk by the company.

The following communication from the Hon. Martin Van Buren, Vice President of the United States, and a member of the society, was then read.

New York, Dec. 5th, 1833.

Dear Sir: I regret exceedingly that it is not in my power to attend the anniversary of the Albany St. Nicholas Society, agreeably to your polite invitation.

There is no one, I assure you, who has the success of the society more at heart than myself. Whether considered in respect to the laudable objects of the institution, the goodly feelings which it promotes, or the very creditable manner in which its affairs are conducted, it is richly entitled to the best wishes of every sincere Dutchman, and I value highly the honor of being enrolled among its members.

I have heretofore spoken to you of the interest which the institution of our society had excited in Holland. Amongst the highly distinguished individuals who expressed to me their ardent

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## THE ST. NICHOLAS FEAST

wishes for its continued prosperity, there was one whose health I beg leave to propose to you. He cherishes also, I am happy to be assured, in common with his Government, the most liberal and friendly feeling toward the U. States. I allude to, Baron Ver Stolk Van Soelen, Minister of foreign affairs of the King of the Netherlands.

I am, dear Sir, very cordially yours,

M. VAN BUREN.

To Richard Varick DeWitt, Esq.

Chairman of the Managers.

The health of the Baron was then drunk.

Dr. Beck being called on for a toast, remarked, that in connection with the occasion, the place where we were assembled deserved some notice. This building had been erected through the liberality and public spirit of two gentlemen, brothers, natives of this city, and bearing an honorable name. This beautiful and spacious edifice bore the name of "Stanwix Hall", and he took pleasure in stating, as it was not probably known generally, that this appellation had been given to it at the request of a number of our fellow citizens. It alluded to a memorable fact in the history of the father of these gentlemen. At an eventful period of the Revolutionary war, when the forces of Burgoyne were pouring down in this state, when every circumstance seemed threatening to the American arms, Fort Stanwix (now Rome) was gallantly defended by Colonels Willett and Gansevoort against a detachment of British and



Indians. The importance of this protracted and signal defence need not to be mentioned to any who are familiar with our Revolutionary annals. For this gallant exploit, the name of Gansevoort was inscribed on that inperishable scroll, which is headed by the name of Washington. As a descendant of Dutch ancestors, and in reference to the place, connected with his services, it appeared peculiarly appropriate to drink

“The memory of General Peter Gansevoort.”

The toast was drunk—After which Peter Gansevoort, Esq. rose and said:

“For this compliment, so unexpected—so flattering—permit me, Mr. President, to return to this company, the warmest thanks of the proprietors of Stanwix Hall.

They have erected this spacious building on a site, which, under the blessing of Divine Providence, has descended to the sixth generation. As the recipients of this blessing, they are humbly grateful.

This Hall, in compliance with the expressed wish of our fellow citizens, bears a name in reference to an important event in our Revolutionary History—a name associated with an actor in that scene, who was cradled on this very spot, and whose memory is most dear to its present owners.

If the proprietors, actuated by the spirit of the times, have reared a structure, which not only adds to the embellishment of their native city, but affords conveniences so long required

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## THE ST. NICHOLAS FEAST

for the exhibition of works of art, and suitable and ample accommodations for those public amusements, innocent in themselves and indispensably necessary in a large and growing commercial community, they have accomplished their intention, and experience a high satisfaction, which is greatly increased by the moral spectacle now exhibited in this Hall.'"

Mr. Gansevoort then offered as a toast—

The President and other Officers of the St. Nicholas Benevolent Society—We thank them for their spirited exertions, indicated by this sumptuous banquet and these splendid decorations. As representatives of a society, based on benevolence, they have higher praise in their prompt ministration to the wants of the poor.

His Excellency, the Governor,\* being called on by the President, for a sentiment, remarked, that he regretted that no Dutch blood flowed in his veins, but to show that he was, in some measure, connected with the fatherland of Dutchmen, he would give

Holland—Endeared to the descendants of the New England Pilgrims, as the first Asylum of their persecuted fathers.

(The sentiment was received with great applause.)

The following toasts were then given:

Dr. Jonathan Eights, one of the Physicians of the Society. Dutch Courage, and Dutch Patriotism.

\* William Learned Marcy.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

Gen. Van Cortlandt. Albany—with a strong stamp of the Dutch upon it—it will not cease to be respected and admired until frugality, honesty, and hospitality cease to pass current as virtues in this world.

Judge Vanderpoel. Our mothers, and their daughters—characterized by intelligence, frugality and neatness. Our happy homes bear testimony to their virtues and their worth.

John Meads, Esq. Stanwix Hall—The new temple of St. Nicholas—May it always hereafter be *toasted*, yet never be *burnt*!

H. H. Martin. Our Dutch Vice-President, Martin Van Buren.—At the anniversary of St. Nicholas in 1837, may he be smoking his pipe in the “east room” at Washington.

W. H. De Witt. The Sons of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Schiedam and the other Dams of Holland—may their known valor and patriotism always form an impervious Dam to the enemies of their country’s rights.

R. V. De Witt, read an extract from a letter from James Stevenson, Esq. one of the members of the society now in Europe, referring to the hospitality he had received from Mr. Matthiesen, residing in the vicinity of Haerlem.

Other toasts were given by, John Van Buren; Gen. Van Schoonhoven; Simeon De Witt, Esq.; T. Van Vechten; George M. Bleeker; D. Graham Jr. Esq.; Dr. Herman Wendell; General Solomon Van Rensselaer; Rensselaer Schuyler, Esq.; C. W. Groesbeeck; J. Blunt, Esq.; P. V. Shankland; S. F. B. Morse, Esq.;

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## THE ST. NICHOLAS FEAST

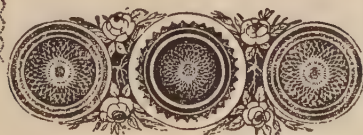
C. C. Sebring, Esq.; Wm. Smith; C. A. Ten Eyck; L. Cruttenden; Adjutant General Hubbell; Dr. Peter Wendell; Herman Gansevoort; Cornelius Egberts; W. W. Groesbeck; Silas C. Herring; George Brinckerhoff; J. F. Porter; William Seymour; Cornelius Ten Broeck; J. Rhoades; Isaac W. Staats; A. M. Strong; W. H. Staats; S. S. Benedict; Albert Gallup; Dr. A. Groesbeck; D. P. Marshall; Charles N. Bleecker; Wm. H. Fonday; H. Ames; Stephen Groesbeeck, Esq.; General Chasse; Charles B. Lansing; J. P. Bradstreet; J. G. Mather; P. H. Ostrander; John Knower; D. B. Slingerland; Henry Bleecker, Jr.; Wm. E. Bleecker; J. C. Van Schoonhoven; A. M. Slingerland; Dr. J. F. Townsend; P. Carmichael; John C. Staats; Mr. Whale; L. Fidler; H. H. Martin; Giles F. Yates, Esq.; Dr. B. P. Staats.

## IN THE NETHERLANDS

AS THE YEARS passed and Harmanus Bleecker became increasingly distinguished as a lawyer and citizen, a desire he had always had to see something of Europe and especially to visit the Netherlands took stronger possession of him. Never greatly interested in acquiring wealth, he had, notwithstanding, accumulated what in those days was called a comfortable fortune; his mother had died, he had not married, and there was no imperative need to devote himself longer to professional work. He was accordingly free to do as he liked and realized that while in good health and able to enjoy travel, he should most certainly start forth to carry out his great desire.

So, in the fall of 1838, when nearly fifty-nine years old, he decided to retire indefinitely from his law practice and setting no date for his return, to sail for Europe and wander there as he felt inclined, particularly in the land of his ancestors which above all, his heart was set on seeing. This was no sudden determination on his part. The mind of a Dutchman moves slowly and with caution, and Harmanus Bleecker had no other than Dutch blood in his veins.

IN THE NETHERLANDS



*Mr. J. L. Bruyn*

To Proprietors of The Albany Microscope,

PRINTING 100 Imitations

Dr.

*\$3.00*

1838.

*Sept. 24*

Albany,

Received Payment.

*Postman*

Book and Fancy Job Printing, at No 26 Beaver-st.



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After long and calm consideration of his idea in all its phases, Mr. Bleecker finally announced to his Albany friends his determination and the date of his departure. Those friends, interested and delighted, decided that such a momentous event merited a farewell dinner given in honor of the traveler. Therefore on September 18, 1838, a paper was circulated among Mr. Bleecker's friends, which ran as follows:

Dinner to Mr. Harmanus Bleecker:

The undersigned hereby agree to unite in giving a public dinner to their fellow citizen Harmanus Bleecker, Esq., on the occasion of his contemplated departure for Europe, in testimony of their esteem for his character and respect for his many virtues. The arrangements for the time and place to be adjusted hereafter.

(Signed)

J. H. Ten Eyck	George M. Bleecker
T. Romeyn Beck	John J. Wendell
John V. L. Pruyn	A. McIntyre
Lansing Pruyn	J. W. D. McIntyre
C. A. Ten Eyck	Herman Wendell
Peter Gansvoort	M. P. Cogswell
Erastus Corning	James Horner
Peter Wendell	Garret W. Ryckman
Teunis Van Vechten	Alonso Crittenden
Sol. Van Rensselaer	John L. Wendell
Barent Bleecker	Richd. Van Rensselaer
G. Y. Lansing	Wm. Parmelee

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John Townsend	S. C. Flagg
W. R. Bleecker	Theodore Olcott
Thomas W. Olcott	B. R. Wood
R. V. DeWitt	D. Wood
J. Winne, Junr.	W. H. Fonday
Jas. Stevenson	Horace B. Webster
Henry L. Webb	J. Taylor
Edwd. Brinckerhoff	C. Van Benthuyzen
Peter Seton Henry	John I. Kane
John B. Van Schaick	James King
Julius Rhoades	Edwin Croswell
James Kidd	Chas. E. Dudley
D. D. Barnard	John Davis
Alfred Douglas	James M. French
Henry Bleecker	A. D. Patchin
Rufus H. King	A. C. Myers
John A. Dix	S. Van Rensselaer
Joel A. Wing	James McKown
James McNaughton	W. P. Van Rensselaer
S. DeWitt Bloodgood	Marcus T. Reynolds
John Q. Wilson	J. L. Rathbone
G. W. Stanton	John A. Livingston

To go to Europe in those days, and to go for an indefinite stay, was an unusual undertaking; and from a city the size of Albany few started forth in the thirties to make such a journey alone. Mr. Bleecker had hoped to have as his companion, Romeyn Brodhead, who was a distant connection as well as a son of old friends, but the young man was unable to accompany him.

No account has been found of the farewell

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banquet given to Mr. Bleeker. All that remains to show that it actually took place is a hurried note from Governor Marcy written after the dinner in which he attempts to recall what he had said in his extemporaneous speech:

My dear Sir:

I have no distinct recollection of what I said at the B Dinner. The enclosed is as near it as I can remember. On reading it over I still think so far as I am concerned it would be better to say; the Governor was toasted, he briefly tendered his thanks and then gave a sentiment complimentary to those who gave the entertainment to the much esteemed Guest the precise language of which is not recollected.

Yours sincerely

W. L. MARCY

Governor Marcy, after expressing his acknowledgments to the company for the kind and flattering manner in which they had received the last toast observed that as he had been invited to join them in testifying their regard for their much esteemed fellow citizen about to be temporarily separated from them, he deemed it not improper for him to indulge in a remark somewhat different from the general tenor of the sentiments which would be offered by the present company. Those who have sought the present occasion to show the high estimation in which they hold private worth and the personal qualities that endear social intercourse are not to be presumed regardless of the culti-

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NORTH PEARL STREET BETWEEN MAIDEN LANE AND STEUBEN STREET, ALBANY, 1805  
*Among the trees in the background is the gabled roof of Harmanus Bleeker's Home*



## IN THE NETHERLANDS

vation of the like virtues in themselves. The honor was not all on the side of their worthy guest. It was reflected back upon his entertainers and he stood in a position that allowed him to commend their proceedings on this occasion. He therefore proposed: The Entertainers of the esteemed guest whom the company had assembled to honor: May they long enjoy the pleasures of social intercourse, and the blessings of health and prosperity.

A few days before the traveler left Albany, there came to him from Newport a note of farewell from the noted preacher William Ellery Channing:

My dear Sir—

I have received your letter speaking of your proposed voyage to Europe. I am glad you are to enjoy this pleasure and trust you will be restored to your native land after a safe and happy absence. To my shame, I must say, that I am too indolent to keep up much correspondence with friends at home or abroad. I take great pleasure in receiving letters, but whilst I read almost every thing with pleasure I find very little in letter writing. I have of course a few correspondents to whom I can give you letters. I send you a few now, and may think of others which may be useful. Dr. Carpenter is a much respected Unitarian minister of Bristol where you will land, and he can give you a world of information. Mr Rathbone is the Mayor of Liverpool and one of the best men



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of the country. Mr Thornely is of Liverpool, but you will probably see him in London, during the session of Parliament. Perhaps you know Miss Martineau, but wishing to write her, I named you in the letter. Mrs Bache you will of course wish to see. It will gratify me much to hear from you during your travels.

With the best wishes, I remain,

Very sincerely

Your friend,

WM E CHANNING

Newport—Sept 24—1838  
(H. Bleecker)

And just as he was sailing—in fact, sent to him in care of Theodore Sedgwick at the Astor House—Mr. Bleecker received a letter from Elkanah Watson, well known in the early days of Albany:\*

5 Oct. 1838

Dear Sir,

I wrote Mr. Morse in conformity to your wishes and my duty of which I informed you as soon as my health would admit. I am in anxious solicitude to hear from both. Meantime as an old friend I have tho't it proper to state to you that my Memoirs are now in train of publication and will be under the supervision of Winslow at the press in N. Y. or Phila. Among recent incidents (exactly one year this day) the

\* Elkanah Watson came to Albany from his birthplace, Providence, Rhode Island, in 1789, and made it his home for eighteen years. He was especially known for his work on improvements in navigation, including the Erie Canal. After living for a time in Pittsfield he moved to Port Kent, N. Y.

## IN THE NETHERLANDS

cattle show and the 10th, the following may amuse you and will probably appear in my journey to Berkshire attending the cattle show, 1837, not from any intrinsic value but from its singular coincidence, which may never have happened before or ever will again. Extract from my Journal, 10th Oct. 1837.

“A new generation has replaced the entire mass of Dutch inhabitants on my first settlement in Albany 48 years ago, with the exception of a few scattering trees—here and there—in the forest of men at that day.

A new generation has filled the void intermixed with a large portion of interlopers as we Yankees were then called—in fact there were but four New England families who resided in the city at that time. In one of my rambles in North Market Street, I came in contact with an old Dutchman, commonly called Nickey Bleeker, a worthy man, and a respectable merchant of former times;—but now—alas—like myself an admiring spectator of the passing scenes, which to us seemed like the work of magic beyond the veil. We shook hands in great cordiality; for we were always on terms of friendship. After some casual remarks in grateful recollection of my long and arduous efforts in the promotion of improvements, especially in the paving of this venerable city,—well says I in the true Yankee tone of interrogatory—Mr. Bleeker how old are you?—suppose we compare ages!—well says he, I was born in the year 1738—So was I—What month?—January—So

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was I—What day of the month? The 22—So was I—At what hour? Precisely at 12 o'clock at noon as our family records testify—So was I precisely at that hour as will appear in our bible—of many years standing. We were both astonished at this remarkable coincidence, which may have never taken place before between two individuals—but strictly correct in point of facts."

My friend—I do not seek to trouble you with answering me on this subject because I know well your aversion to pen and ink.

But I do earnestly request if you deem it of sufficient interest to appear among the miscellaneous incidents of my work—that you will do me the favour to call on Mr. B—to read to him the above narrative in the view of ascertaining the exactness of my statement committed from memory to make a short certificate of the result to deposit with the Cashier of the N. Y. State Bank, directed to remain subject to my order, or among your files, should you wing your flight to regions of bliss where it may be found. If the work goes ahead it will be immediately in progress and I shall proceed to N. Y. in all this month to make preliminary arrangements, and I will wait on you in person.

Very cordially and affectionately

Your old friend

E. WATSON

Port Kent

5 Oct. 1838.

Perhaps you may deem it expedient in a view to familiarize the public with one trait—in the  
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pending work—that it should appear in print—I have no objection—with a request you will scan it with a critics eye as to the grammar—spelling etc. etc., as it is strongly hinted to me the copyright may be a source of some pecuniary relief in my old age. In that view and other considerations I will frankly admit to you that myself and family are anxious it should appear before I take my final leave of all that is sub-lunary here below.

Harmanus Bleeker Esq.

Care of Theo Sedgwick Jr.

Astor House

New York.

Mr. Bleeker's former law partner, Theodore Sedgwick, having been unable to attend the dinner in Albany, wrote:

Stockbridge 23 Sept. 1838.

Peter Seton Henry Esq.

Dear Sir;

I have received your very kind and complimentary invitation to the dinner intended to be given to our mutual friend H. Bleeker before his departure for Europe. It gives me great pleasure to know, that so gratifying a testimonial of esteem, and so well deserved, is to be presented to him. I am very sorry to say, that circumstances will prevent me from participating in the festivities of the occasion. I shall however I trust have it in my power to bid him farewell at New York. Please make my ac-

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knowledgements to the gentlemen who have  
united with you in this friendly invitation.

With great Respect

Your Obt. Servt.

T. SEDGWICK.

And true to his promise, he met Mr. Bleeker  
in New York early in October, bringing with him  
this affectionate note from Mrs. Sedgwick:

Stockbridge 29th Sept. 1838.

My dear friend

I cannot allow Mr. Sedgwick to go without  
bearing you a parting greeting. I did hope to  
have shaken your hand once again before your  
departure; & so have uttered the many good  
wishes and benedictions that rise to my lips as  
I think of you—but since so it must not be, &  
that this is the only medium left to me, receive  
thro' it my dear friend, the earnest expression  
of my wish for your health, your enjoyment, &  
your safe return—a wish as sincere & affection-  
ate as thirty years of friendship can inspire.  
That you will have moments of weariness, per-  
haps of heart-sickness for the land & the friends  
you leave, is to be expected—but that your  
enjoyments & advantages will furnish you a  
balance of pleasure, I have no doubt. Few per-  
sons have ever gone abroad so well fitted to  
appreciate what is worthy of admiration—or so  
well instructed in whatever is peculiar to our-  
selves. These qualifications, together with your  
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personal claims, cannot but insure you a more than common share of the benefits to be derived from travelling. Mr. Sedgwick & Sara will have an opportunity of a personal farewell. Aunt Symmes desires me to offer hers with her cordial good wishes. Maria prefers to add a line for herself.

God bless you—& believe me that as no one more desires you happiness abroad, so no one will more heartily rejoice to welcome you home,

than yours very truly

& affectionately

S. SEDGWICK

And so Harmanus Bleecker sailed. Surely no man merited more than he the pleasure that lay before him. Almost sixty years of age, never having left his own country, full of placid interest in the customs of other lands, particularly the Netherlands, with an open mind and a kind heart, Mr. Bleecker must have watched his native land fade from sight with only gratitude for what had been his in the past and happy anticipation of what lay before him across the sea.

His passport signed by John Forsyth, Secretary of State, was dated September 3, 1838, and described him as fifty-eight years of age, five feet ten inches high, with blue eyes, brown hair slightly gray and complexion light—rather blond.

The ship in which he sailed—the name of which



HARMANUS BLEECKER

is not mentioned—was bound for Bristol, England. But Mr. Bleecker spent only a few weeks in Great Britain and by the end of November had reached Paris and established himself at the comfortable Hotel Meurice. General Lewis Cass, who was Secretary of War in Andrew Jackson's Cabinet, had been appointed by President Van Buren, United States Minister to France, and it was with him and Mrs. Cass that Bleecker spent his Christmas Eve. Later he dined at the legation and went to one of the Thursday evening receptions. During his stay Samuel B. Morse, the inventor, who was at that time in Paris, sent him this note marked "très pressé":

H. Bleecker Esq.

My dear Sir,

At one o'clock to-day I shall have a room full of the French savants to see the operation of my telegraph. If it would gratify you to see them and if I shall be very happy to have you come at that hour.

With sincere respect and  
esteem, my dear sir,

Your friend and servt.

SAM. S. B. MORSE.

Wednesday morning.

Dec. 26th, 1838.

Care Hotel des Mathurins

5 rue neuve des Mathurins.

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Early in the New Year of 1839 Bleecker wrote home:

I hope when this letter reaches dear Albany, enough will be left of 1839 to render the wish of a happy year not without some significance. Much is made of New Year's day here; but not in the rational, useful and agreeable way that we observe it. . . . My present intention is to go hence, through Belgium, to Holland. Mr Beekman and Mr Duyckinck of New York will probably accompany me.

. . . . .

Mr. Bleecker met these two young men, sons of old acquaintances, in Paris, and at once found them congenial. All of them being bound for the Hague, it was finally decided that they should journey there together. The legation in Paris having assured them that the necessary papers from the United States legation at the Hague providing for their entry into the Netherlands would meet them in Brussels, the three men, therefore, started forth about the middle of January for that city.

But when Brussels was reached the passports had not yet come—so a halt was imperative, and Mr. Bleecker wrote to Mr. Davezac at the Hague:

HARMANUS BLEECKER

Brussels, 26th Jan. 1839.

Sir,

Mr. Cass our Minister to the court of France, some time ago wrote to you to request you to obtain permissions for Mr. James W. Beekman and Mr. Evert A. Duyckinck of New York and myself to enter Holland, through Belgium, and afterwards informed me that he had received an answer from you that you had forwarded the papers authorizing our entry into Holland to the Post office in this place, enclosed in a letter to me to remain till I should call for it. I called at the office today and was told that there was no such letter nor *any letter* in the *Poste restante*. The matter was explained and stated, but the answer was that there was no such letter. My companions and I were very much disappointed; but as we wish to stay here, and in the neighborhood two or three days, it will (be) no inconvenience to us to wait till we receive your answer with the desired permissions, which we must ask you to obtain again for us, and to forward to this place. Be good enough to direct your letter to me, to the care of Mr. M. Messel, Banker. I am very much obliged for your early attention to my former request through Mr. Cass, and regret that the miscarriage of your letter obliges me to ask you to repeat your office.

With great respect

Your ob. Servant,

H. BLEECKER

Auguste Davezac,  
Chargé &c.

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Legation of the United States of America to  
the Netherlands.

The Hague 29 January 1839.

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge your letter, which, tho' of the 26th, and having the Brussels stamp of the 27th only reached The Hague this morning. I regret extremely your disappointment at not finding the permission I had obtained at the Postoffice. I have ascertained that the failure is not imputable to the office here: their books show, that my letter was sent on the 13th inst. These particulars, I only state to absolve myself of any neglect as regards the care I took on the occasion. I have, immediately, made application for a new permission, which you will receive on Saturday at latest. I should the more deplore this awkwardness, did I not know, that, to inquisitive travellers, several days given to the Master works both of architecture and of painting which abound in Brussels, will not be considered as thrown away. Allow me to hope that your stay at The Hague will be long enough to enable me to show you, that the *Old Netherlands* have also their treasures, of the Pictorial Art, at least!

I have the honor to be, Sir, with great respect  
Your humble and Ob. Svt.

A. DAVEZAC

H. Bleecker, Esq.

A few days wait brought the delayed papers,  
and these being received, the three travelers con-

tinued their leisurely journey to the border. Finally, on one of the short winter days of February, they entered the land toward which for so many years Harmanus Bleecker's eyes had looked with desire and affection. I wish I might have seen his happy face, as he drove over the frozen roads, past dykes and windmills and close-shut cottages and along the canal sides where here and there bright fires burned on which warmly clad women made *wafelen* and *poffertjes* to sell to the skaters, many of whom in peasant dress went swinging by sedately.

The three travelers settled for a time at the Hague and there they seem to have passed some weeks, enjoying its charms and those of nearby cities. At length the two younger men, having made plans for visiting other countries, bade their traveling companion farewell and started for England. But from time to time letters from them came to Mr. Bleecker, as if they were loath to have loosened the tie of friendship which so felicitously bound them to the courteous Albany Dutchman. Indeed, Mr. Beekman returned in the fall to the Hague and for a short time the following year, served as Mr. Bleecker's secretary. During the summer of 1839 the two following letters arrived in Holland:

IN THE NETHERLANDS

Birmingham, July 2, 1839.

My dear Sir

I begin to get tired of mere travelling and propose to myself some better mode of passing at least a part of the approaching fall and winter. I am desirous of seriously undertaking the study of the Dutch language. You remember the purchases I made of Wagenaar & other Dutch books when I had the pleasure of being with you last spring—and I then intended to learn how to read them when I had returned home—I find by recent letters that there exists nothing to call me to New York for some time to come, and I imagine the facilities for acquiring any language to be much greater in the land where it is spoken than any where else. May I ask then the favor of your counsel as to the proper place in Holland for carrying out my design? Which offers most advantages, Leyden, Harlem, The Hague, or can you not name to me some quiet place where good teachers are to be found, and nothing but Dutch or French spoken?

You know the interest I feel in every thing Dutch from my early associations. There are books & papers at home which are sealed to me now, but which a few months proper application would enable me to read.

. . . . .

I am with great respect & esteem

Very truly yours

JAMES W. BEEKMAN

To H. Bleecker, Esq.



HARMANUS BLEECKER

Edinburgh, Aug. 9th 1839.

My dear Mr. Bleeker

I had the pleasure of finding your favour of 15th July awaiting me on my arrival here yesterday. It certainly is my desire to attempt seriously the acquisition of the Dutch language as far as will enable me to *read* with facility. To speak a foreign tongue, requires, I know by experience, many months—perhaps several years—of practice, a longer time than I can promise at present. As you justly suggest, I shall be able to improve myself in French, even more, I am inclined to think, than in France itself—for I shall certainly have more occasion to blunder forward in Holland than I had in Paris.

I thank you for the very kind invitation you give me to come to The Hague—your society will be an advantage to me of which I am well aware. As my application to you for advice as to my plans was sincere, I accept your counsel, and shall avail myself of it by presenting myself at The Hague towards the first week of September—perhaps not sooner than the 15th.

Mr. Duyekinck and I, have been rambling through Wales, Yorkshire, and the Marshes of the Scottish Border for the last month. We spent the first three days of this week at Melrose, Abbotsford and the classic ground thereabouts. Mr. D. desires his best respects to you—he proposes to go back to Paris.

IN THE NETHERLANDS

With many thanks for your prompt answer,  
I am very sincerely & respectfully

Your Obt. Servt.

J. W. BEEKMAN

To the

Hon. Harmanus Bleecker

Bleecker remained in the Netherlands for some months. There he saw the spring of 1839 come on and the great tulip and hyacinth gardens near Haarlem break into bloom. He traveled for the most part alone and in leisurely fashion, which was what he most enjoyed, getting into touch by letters of introduction with a number of interesting people. In March of that year he wrote this modest letter to my father, John V. L. Pruyn:

The Hague, 1st March, 1839.

My dear Sir,

I send the enclosed papers containing notices of myself, with some reluctance. But considering myself as the representative of the descendants of the Dutch in Albany & that it is on that account principally that so much attention has been shown me here, I hope it will not be considered that I am gratifying my own vanity in forwarding them to you. I hope they will go to New York free from postage. You can have no conception of the pleasure that is given here, by the St. Nicholas celebrations in Albany. I think I shall be able to find Wagenaar's History

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of the Fatherland for you, at a very low price. I have been here since the 15th instant. Wherever I have been I have endeavored to see & contemplate what is most interesting. Rotterdam is a city of much interest & beauty. This place equals all I supposed it to be. The inhabitants are very polite, as you may suppose from the court having been here so long; they are very social in their habits. The houses are spacious and elegant; tho' many of them are very old, they do not look so, and are not in what we consider the Dutch Style. Many inferior ones here, & some large ones in other towns are in that style. I went with Mr. Fageé a distinguished person of this city, a day or two ago to Delft to see what was curious there. We were informed there, that the chest in which Grotius escaped from Louvestein was still in Delft. This was not known to Mr. F. We found it with the portraits of the Family of the De Groots & a table of their genealogy in the possession of a widow whose husband was a descendant of a branch of the family of De Groot. I immediately recognized the portraits of Grotius & his wife from the engravings I had seen.

I was much shocked to hear of the death of Mr. Van Schaick. That of the Patroon tho' expected has affected me very much. "What shadows we are! What shadows we pursue!" My compliments to all friends.

I can never be sufficiently grateful for the attention and kindness I have received here,  
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THE HAGUE, 1839  
"The Voyer a jewel set in its midst"



## IN THE NETHERLANDS

where I had not a single personal acquaintance except the young prince Hendrik (who you know was but 15 when we saw him), Col. Avriene and young Mr. Huygens who happens now to be here. You must consider the manner in which I have been treated here as being principally on account of the St. Nicholas Society and therefore I send the newspapers for their benefit.

Your Legislature should pass a new law concerning trusts. I shall be obliged to you to inform me what it is. Direct to the care of Mr. Stevenson, London, who will know my whereabouts. After some days I intend to go hence to Leyden for 3 or 4 days, & thence to Amsterdam. Excuse this scrawl. I have so much & so many people to see that I am always in great haste.

Your friend,

H. BLEECKER

J. V. L. Pruyn, Esq.

Early in June Mr. Bleecker crossed to London. He had accomplished his great aim, that of seeing the Netherlands, and was now ready to leave there, in order to travel leisurely in other countries. His plans for the summer were already arranged and friends from home were to accompany him on the journey. But while awaiting their arrival in London, there came a letter which altered for some years his future life.



## HARMANUS BLEECKER

Ten years earlier just before his friend Martin Van Buren left Albany to enter President Jackson's Cabinet, the story goes that one day Harmanus Bleeker sat talking with Van Buren and Benjamin F. Butler. As he spoke earnestly of his interest in Dutch life and literature and of his desire to visit the country of his ancestors, Van Buren suddenly turned to him and said laughingly: "If I should ever become President of the United States, Bleeker, I am going to send you as Minister to the Netherlands."

Seven years later, when Van Buren did become President, Bleeker remembered this promise. But as a year and a half passed and nothing further was said by the President on the matter, Bleeker, before sailing put the probability of such an appointment entirely out of his mind, and started forth on his journey with no other idea than that of making a pleasant tour in Europe.

But the letter that reached him in London bore the news which, upon leaving Albany, had seemed improbable.

It came from the State Department at Washington and announced his appointment on May 15th as Chargé d'Affaires of the United States of

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America to the Netherlands.\* A few days before the arrival of this important news, Bleecker wrote my father:

London, 13th June, 1839.

My dear Sir,

. . . I came hither at this time to see London in the season, as it is called, and to pass the summer in other parts of England and Scotland, not having heard anything of my appointment to Holland till my arrival here; nor have I yet heard of it from the Department of State. Having passed nearly four months in Holland and gratified my curiosity, the place is much less desirable to me than it was before I left home, and as the thing was then considered out of the question, my arrangements were not made

\* The diplomatic representatives of the United States are of the following classes:

- (a) Ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary
- (b) Envoys extraordinary and ministers plenipotentiary and special commissioners, when styled as having the rank of envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary;
- (c) Ministers resident.

These grades of representatives are accredited by the President.

- (d) *Chargés d’Affaires* commissioned by the President as such and accredited by the Secretary of State to the minister for Foreign Affairs of the government to which they are sent.

The United States established diplomatic relations with the Netherlands in 1792, accrediting to the Hague a Minister resident; later it was represented by a Minister; but from the period 1831 to 1854 the rank of the representatives of the United States at the Hague was *Chargé d’Affaires*. Mr. Bleecker was preceded and succeeded by a man of that rank, and that was the rank which he held during the term of his office.

*Through the kindness of the State Department at Washington.*

HARMANUS BLEECKER

with a view to an absence of more than 18 months or two years at most.

In a pecuniary point of view the office would be of some importance to me, but I would much rather live in Albany the next two years than in the Hague. If I should receive the commission I must decide to accept it or not. Under all the circumstances it may be difficult to refuse it. If my library were in the Hague I would be better satisfied in regard to a residence there, and if I accept it, I hope I shall be at liberty to leave Holland now and then. I cannot think of being absent from my native land for a long time. If Mr. Van Buren should not be re-elected, I should of course not remain in office longer than his first term, long before the expiration of which I shall probably wish to be at home.

Your friend

H. BLEECKER.

However, after due deliberation, Mr. Bleeker decided to accept the appointment. He therefore abandoned his plan of spending the summer in England and Scotland and after only a few days delay returned to Holland. On the 13th of July he delivered his credentials to the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Hague and at once took up his residence there.

My father wrote him on May 25, 1839:

My dear Sir,

I received your favor enclosing the two newspapers containing a notice of your arrival at  
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the Hague in due time. I took the liberty of translating both articles for the (Albany) Argus. Your friends were much gratified in hearing of the attention and regard with which you were treated. Your recent appointment as Chargé to the Hague has met with universal satisfaction by both political parties and has afforded great pleasure to your personal friends. Allow me to congratulate you on the event. I regret that we shall lose you for a much longer time than expected when you left, but I have no doubt you will find it agreeable and profitable to spend some two or three years at the Hague. The situation is one which will enable you, I presume, to be absent some three or four months in the year without any sacrifice of the public interests.

Yours truly,

JOHN V. L. PRUYN.

Bleecker took rooms at the pleasant Hotel Bellevue which still exists and is situated on an avenue leading to the Bosch. While there he looked about for a place to serve both as legation and home and soon found what he desired—a small house with a pleasant garden on Casuarie straat,\* a quiet and central street of the Hague, not far from the Witte Club.

Here he settled and thoroughly enjoyed two and a half years of tranquil Dutch life. He

\* In modern Dutch, written Kasuarie straat.

found an excellent man-servant, who with his wife came at once to carry on the household. Both of these competent people remained with Mr. Bleecker until he left the Netherlands and were devoted to his interests. Indeed, François, the husband, is mentioned often with affection in letters which came to Bleecker from those who had stayed in the comfortable legation: "Tell François that I do not forget him or his family in the Casuarie straat", wrote Romeyn Brodhead from Albany. "Please remember me to all my friends at the Hague, and particularly to François", said a letter from New York from Robert James.

And these appreciations began even earlier, for only a few weeks after Mr. Bleecker was settled in his new home, Mr. Davezac, on his way back to the United States, wrote him a brief note of farewell from London saying that before sailing he was to dine at Lord Brougham's to meet Lord Lindhurst, and then added: "Remember me to François and to the kind people of my late home."

When at the Hague during the summer of 1922, I took a cab one afternoon and told the coachman to drive past the Hotel Bellevue, where Mr. Bleecker first lived and then to the Casuarie

straat nearby. I told him to drive slowly along its two blocks to the Lange Hout-straat in order that I might look thoroughly at the exterior of every building. Careful search among all of Harmanus Bleecker's letters fails to disclose the number of the house in which, guarded by his faithful François, he so agreeably lived. Imagination, therefore, had to be brought into use. The street is narrow and dark, and is now nearly filled with stables and garages. Few houses remain, and only one that is attractive—number 16—which is small and is built in the old Dutch fashion with its gable end to the street and has behind it a garden. I hope that was Harmanus Bleecker's house!

Here, in quiet Casuarie straat, he did his official work, received his friends and gave a few pleasant dinners, spoken of occasionally in his letters home.

He also enjoyed, in a placid fashion, going into the social life of the Hague where his knowledge of the Dutch language made it possible for him to come at once into easy and delightful contact with all sorts of people. There are a score of notes preserved from men of importance in court and diplomatic circles, inviting him to dinners or evening parties or for visits at their country



houses. Most of these notes were written in Dutch or French and were addressed with all the dignity demanded by his position, as one from Baron Falck, inviting him to a small reception—"Een klein gezelschap"—which was addressed, "Voor den Heer H. Bleecker, Chargé d'Affaires der Vereenigde Staten."

Others, who had entered into relations of one sort or another with the United States, wrote him, with the lingual ability of the Dutch, in his own language. In excellent English, on January 3, 1841, Jonkheer Robert Boreel accepted an invitation to dinner, and in April of the same year wrote, also in the same language:

My dear Sir:

I return to you, with many thanks, the books you have been so kind as to lend me, and which have given me much pleasure. This morning I intended to call on you, and bid you good bye, before leaving the Hague, but my whole afternoon was taken up with paying and receiving family visits, so that I just come home at five o'clock.

I hope you will fulfill the promise you made us to come and see us in the country, and whenever you may feel inclined to pay us a visit, we shall be truly happy to receive you. One line addressed to me at Wykeroog, by Beverwyk, will always reach me, and I have no plan of stirring from home during the whole summer.

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With kind regards of Mrs. Boreel, believe me  
My dear Sir,

Yours very truly,  
ROBERT BOREEL.

Mr. Bleecker's first secretary, Romeyn Brodhead, wrote years afterwards, in 1867:

Mr. Bleecker's own standing was very high; probably no American Diplomatic agent in Holland ever had the peculiar consideration which was shown to him. This arose, no doubt, partly from the fact of his speaking the Dutch language quite fluently.

. . . He fulfilled all his diplomatic duties with scrupulous fidelity and went to Court in his uniform whenever it was necessary. But he disliked the trappings and did not hesitate to say so.

Of course, he was much in diplomatic society and was always respected there; yet, he did not enjoy it as much as those social gatherings where Dutch was spoken and where he was an especially honored guest.

About this time Mrs. Sedgwick wrote from Stockbridge:

Pray let us know what you are doing and enjoying. Tell us something of society in Holland of which we know so little,—of their women and their education. What they read—how they talk and how our state of manners and degree of civilization compares with what you find there.

We can imagine with what felicity an answer, painstaking in details, was despatched to his kind friend!

Most of all Bleecker enjoyed the quieter pleasures. He enjoyed the Royal Library, only a few blocks from the legation, and very likely some of his leisure time was passed there with Mr. Campbell, for many years its learned director, and still remembered with veneration at the Hague. Here and there in Bleecker's letters to Albany Mr. Campbell is quoted. Certainly the two men had similar interests and could have passed many hours together, conversing on literary matters.

And Mr. Bleecker enjoyed strolling in the Bosch and through the old parts of the city, delighting in the beauty and serenity of the scene—for after the arrival of his secretary, he had time when his daily work at the legation was over to enjoy himself in the ways he preferred.

I like to think of him taking in the late afternoon his pleasant walks along the path by the Vyver—that jewel set in the midst of the Hague—in whose waters are tranquilly reflected the fine old picture gallery and Parliament Houses, and over which sound the bells of the distant carillon; or beneath the trees along the

broad Voorhout—a place that he especially admired. The Royal Library looks down upon these trees. Perhaps Dr. Campbell sometimes saw him and joined him at the end of his quiet stroll to talk of books and bookmen as they slowly walked together across the old Square and toward the Legation.

I like indeed to think of the selection of Harmanus Bleecker to represent the United States at the Hague as a choice of peculiar fitness—one which gave gratification to the Dutch people and brought honor to his own. For he grew to love and understand the Netherlands as few of his countrymen could have done and valued thoroughly its serene and scholarly atmosphere.

But Albany and his friends there were never forgotten. With the improvement of his beloved city in mind, he wrote, July, 1839, to my father:

Several parts of the Hague as you have always heard are exceedingly beautiful. I am now more sensible than ever how beautiful Albany may be made. Its position affords views which cannot be in a flat country. The widest part of Market Street and the upper part of State Street should be enclosed for parks like that near your father's house.\* The enclosures for cheapness might, at first, be of wood. On the high ground in the western part of the

\* Site of the present John V. L. Pruyn library.

city, care should be taken to preserve large open grounds for trees and walks. Almost every city in this country is well provided with such places. Amsterdam is not; and therefore people go to Haarlem, about 9 miles, to enjoy the beautiful wood adjacent to that place. In England, the importance of such places has considerably occupied the attention of parliament. The London parks and Squares are very beautiful and exceedingly important to the inhabitants.

In early October went another letter in which he quaintly said:

It gives me great pleasure to make favorable impressions of our country; which I have many opportunities of doing. You cannot imagine how little is known of us. I have sent to several persons of high standing Dr. Channing's Self-Culture; which went through seven editions in England. I lately left a copy of the Argus containing an account of the examination in the Albany Female Academy in a family here, in which English is read and more or less spoken. Things of this sort give Europeans favorable opinions of the extent of our intelligence and civilization. I have desired Mr Vander Poel to send me a number of copies of the next President's Message, which I intend to send to gentlemen who will read it. Nothing can be more impressive in regard to our country and institutions.

If Mr Webster should send me Tillinghast's Digest, let him put up with it Noah Webster's  
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Philosophical Grammar, if he can find it, if not, the last edition of Mr Bullion's Grammar. Webster's grammar will probably be found at Skinner's.

This story tells of a time when the diplomatic business between the Netherlands and the United States was not as important or as exacting as at present and so the representative of the United States in the Netherlands was not given a secretary to aid him with his correspondence or to help him with his social duties. This lack Bleecker at once saw might cause difficulties, for many letters must be written, many visits paid, many messages delivered and certain formalities followed in these matters which no one more than he would wish to have observed. So, shortly after he had taken up his official duties at the Hague, Bleecker decided that to have help in his work was imperative, even if he were obliged to pay his assistant out of his own salary. Accordingly, this letter to my father went across the ocean:

Do you know a very fine young man in Albany, who would like to come to this place and serve as a clerk to me, which would occupy hardly any of his time, with the opportunity of learning German, Dutch and French very cheaply and general law and jurisprudence?



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I am not allowed anything for a Secretary or Clerk's hire; and what such a young man as I speak of could earn of me would, of course, not amount to much. I would instruct him in jurisprudence, and by being an attaché of the legation, he would be in society, in which he would hear English, French, German and Dutch. He must come for these advantages. As to mere occasional copying, which would be all that I should want of him, I suppose I can find some one here to do it. But I should prefer to have it done by a person attached to the legation. Instruction in the ancient and modern languages can be cheaply obtained. Of course, I wish a person who has a right ambition to improve himself.

Mr. S. DeWitt Bloodgood of Albany, a cousin of Francis Bloodgood, a founder and president of the New York State Bank, being consulted by my father, immediately wrote Mr. Bleecker in reply:

Albany, Aug. 23 1839

My dear Sir:

Your letter to Mr Pruyn expressing a wish to have some one sent out to you to act as a private Secretary was seen by me and reminded me of your former desire to have Romeyn Brodhead as your travelling companion. I immediately wrote him with the consent of Mr Pruyn and stated your views. He has made up his mind to go out in the Great Western and offer

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you his services, which I cannot doubt will be very agreeable to you. He has that talent and information, and those habits which will make him useful to you, and he cannot but be greatly improved by his being with you.

I remain Dear Sir

Yours truly

S. DEWITT BLOODGOOD.

(Harmanus Bleecker Esq.)

John Romeyn Brodhead, then a young man of twenty-five, was the son of the Rev. Jacob Romeyn Brodhead, a prominent minister of the New York Consistory, and related to the Bleeckers, Van Cortlandts and Van Schaicks. He became in later years an historian of importance. The unusual offer of Harmanus Bleecker appealed to him for he saw its opportunities and possibilities. He must have sailed for the Netherlands almost immediately, as in two months time he had reached the Hague, whence he wrote my father:

. . . . .  
My voyage was a most delightful one, and indeed I have often thought if I had had the ordering of events myself, I could not have had a more pleasant time. . . .

After spending a few days in London hunting lions, I posted off to this place, where I arrived some ten days ago, and found Mr Bleecker very well, and apparently much

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pleased at my arrival. My personal details of matters and things in America I believe were gratifying to him; at all events I do not think that a residence abroad has at all diminished his regard for his home.

. . . . .

That Brodhead took hold of his work with enthusiasm we may infer from what Mr. Bleecker wrote a few months later:

Mr. Brodhead is studying French. He is very useful to me. It requires some resolution for a young man who does not speak Dutch or French to remain here, but a man of sense should not mind this. Many Dutch people speak English, which is destined to be the dominant language of the commercial world, and the knowledge of it is rapidly extending over the European part of this continent.

Soon after Romeyn Brodhead's arrival, and the work of the legation had settled somewhat into a routine, all sorts of letters from Bleecker's friends, as well as from unknown people, in the United States, began to arrive, asking a variety of questions. Gerrit Yates Lansing asked him to see a firm of Amsterdam bankers and to ascertain from them the value of a certain house on the Leydengracht, seven-tenths of which was owned by the heirs of Jacob C. Ten Eyck of Albany, who were desirous of disposing of it.

The Reverend Thomas DeWitt of New York wrote: "I hope it will not be considered obtrusive for me to solicit, whenever your leisure may permit, communications of your observations which may be allowed in the columns of the *Christian Intelligencer*", and Robert Baird presented a long account of foreign missionary work in the Sandwich Islands, asking aid in getting articles concerning their work into Dutch newspapers. Dr. Romeyn Beck, the famous headmaster for many years of the Boys' Academy at Albany, sent a letter saying: "If perfectly convenient, I shall be greatly gratified to obtain any statistical reports of hospitals, prisons, lunatic asylums, or of any mortality of cities—many of these not being published for sale are here unattainable."

Someone else wrote from the United States asking Mr. Bleecker's advice on the condition of the Reformed Church in Holland and if he would be so kind as to send a detailed list of its various divisions and its customs in worship. Another letter said: "My grandfather Houckgeest deposited a fund in the Orphans Chamber at Amsterdam—how long since we cannot tell. We wish you to make inquiry as to the amount remaining for the heirs in America." There were also questions asked as to property belonging to a

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family in northern New York named Vrooman, about which Mr. Charles B. Lansing of Albany, accompanied by Mr. Vrooman, appeared at the Hague on a search which proved fruitless.

To the interests of everyone who wrote or came, no matter what his errand, Mr. Bleecker gave the greatest consideration, and with the help of his secretary made innumerable inquiries and wrote many letters. The accidental killing of an American sailor by the captain of another American ship at Rotterdam occasioned considerable correspondence, but after trial and conviction by a Dutch Court, Captain Hatch was finally pardoned.

About this time Mr. Bleecker received a letter from the President written in his own hand from the White House:

Washington Jany 2 1840

My dear Sir

It would afford me sincere pleasure to be able to write you a long letter in reply to the interesting & friendly communication with which you have favored me; but my occupations laborious and incessant as they are forbid it. I enclose you two copies of the message, one to be presented to the King with an expression of my sincere acknowledgments for the many proofs of his friendly regard with which I have been favored since I had the good fortune to make his acquaintance. You will see that I have

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embraced the occasion to give a more solemn form to the declaration of the high respect I entertain for his character—with how much good will this was done you need not be assured. I beg you also to do me the favor to assure the members of his family who have done me the honor to speak to you of me, that their friendly feelings are most respectfully & sincerely reciprocated. I enclose also a copy of the message for Baron Ver Stolk, to whom as also Messrs Falck & Van Zuylen, please to present my kind regards.

You will see that the message takes strong ground but does not, I am happy to be able to inform you, go one particle beyond the public feeling. Indeed I think I may safely say to you, that the question in regard to an Independent Treasury, which has occasioned so much clamour & unfounded interpretations is almost universally regarded as decided. You will see that it passes both houses without serious opposition. That the Whigs wish it done with, is quite certain, and I have the strongest hopes that a few months will find the public mind here upon all money subjects infinitely improved, if not entirely sound. The conversions of which we hear daily are really surprising. Judge of the rest when I inform you that Mr Binney has become a hard money man, & that the message is extensively popular with the best informed people of all political sects in Philadelphia.

If you see the Duke of Saxe-Weimar please



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to make my best respects to him, & thank also the Dutch Gentleman who was so kind to the Major and Angelica, Le Chevalier Kattendyke, for his attentions to them. I made a very pleasant visit to N. York last summer. Whilst there I promised our friend Miss Brinckerhoff to forward a letter for her to you but it has not yet come to hand. I also saw & had a long talk with your friend James Kane who continues to feel his usual interest in whatever relates to you.

The Major & Angelica desire to be cordially remembered to you. Wishing you a happy New Year and desiring to hear often from you,

I am, D<sup>r</sup> Sir,

Very truly your friend

M. VAN BUREN

H. Bleeker, Esq.

During the summer of 1840 Mr. Bleeker went on a short journey to England. His secretary took charge of the legation and kept him in touch with what happened during the month of his absence, announcing calls from various Americans who were passing through. One of the letters written by Mr. Brodhead on the 10th of July said:

François informed me that the meeting of the States General is called for the 4th of August next, and that the decree of the King to that effect was inserted in the Staats Courant of this morning. I inclose it to you. François

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and his family send their respectful remembrances to you.

And on August 7th:

My letter to you of August 4th informed you that Mr. C. B. Lansing had arrived here on Monday and that I had introduced him to Mr. Donker Curtuis as the most efficient counsel I could think of. He took Mr. Vrooman's matter in hand and despatched a notary at once to Lisse to ascertain the facts of the case.

As the fall of 1840 approached, the desire for something which he greatly enjoyed in Albany prompted Bleecker to write:

If this should be a good season for hickory nuts, I must trouble you to get me a barrel of the best and ask Mr. Zimmerman to send them to the care of the American Consul at Rotterdam for me. Our nuts will be a curiosity here. The best nuts in our country come from Niskayuna, at Whitbeck's. Stephen Schuyler knows about them.

The following year his liking for this American product was remembered by Robert James, a son of one of his old friends, who sent word from New York in the early winter:

I write particularly to let you know that I shipped, a day or two ago, a barrel of hickory nuts and a dozen of Madeira to you by the Prussian Barque Charlotte Caroline, bound for Rotterdam.

As the year 1840 passed, Romeyn Brodhead, inspired by his surroundings, was becoming increasingly interested in the contribution made by the Netherlands to the early history of the State of New York. Amsterdam was but one hour by railway from the Hague and to Amsterdam he went, often enough to assure himself that further knowledge of the subject lay in his ability to get permission to search there the Archives of the Dutch West India Company. In order to bring this to pass and to have in his possession sufficient money to pay, if needed, for copyists, it was necessary to get authority and financial backing for his undertaking from the Legislature of New York State and to be appointed for the mission by the Governor.

The idea finally possessed him to such a degree that after spending a year of work at the legation, he decided to ask to be relieved of his secretaryship in order that he might give his entire time to the historical undertaking. His purpose, if successful, was to write extensively on the subject.

Mr. Bleecker, always interested in whatever had to do with the history of his State, was sympathetic in the matter and, although knowing he would feel the loss of his secretary, gladly

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acceded to the request. He even wrote to a number of Albany men whom he thought might be of service in arousing interest in the undertaking. And in the following year, when Brodhead with success assured, returned to Holland commissioned by Governor Seward to undertake the researches, his former chief facilitated in every way the work at Amsterdam. That there was little to be found in the Archives of the Dutch West India Company grieved Mr. Bleecker, for Brodhead's investigations proved that all the documents previous to 1700 had been sold in 1818 to paper mills under a government order. In the same generous manner Bleecker rejoiced with Brodhead when later on a search among the Archives of the States General of the Netherlands brought much important and necessary information.

When Brodhead came to deal with the French and English periods in the history of New York State he found it necessary to examine the Archives of London and Paris, and it was again the kind Bleecker who made the way easy by giving him a letter of introduction and recommendation to Edward Everett, then the United States Minister to England.

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Gentlemen

Washington D.C. 1872

I regret exceedingly that my  
public duties will not permit me to avail  
myself of your polite invitation for  
the 6<sup>th</sup> Inst. I beg your pardon to be  
assured that <sup>no</sup> one can cherish a more  
sincerely solicitude for the success of  
your society & the individual welfare  
of its members than I do. Have the  
goodness to offer the assured sentiment  
of my company in my name, &  
believe me with kindest regards

Your friend &  
Obedt. Servt.

H Van Buren

To: Drafts

Genl G. Dyckman

George Burckhardt

John Van Buren

Henry Bleeker Esq &

John C. Foster

For increasing prosperity to the  
good city of Albany, & health and  
happiness to its inhabitants,

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The Hague, 29th Nov. 1841.

Dear Sir,

This letter will be presented to you by Mr. John Romeyn Brodhead, who is in Europe, on an Historical mission from the State of New York, and whom I take the liberty to introduce to your acquaintance. It is important to the purposes of his mission, and to him personally, that he should be permitted to make the researches he is instructed to make in London, and I hope that you will be able to aid him in removing the obstacles, which have been put in his way. Your good offices to him will greatly oblige me.

Accept my congratulations on your appointment to the most important and desirable diplomatic station under our government, and believe me to be

Your friend and  
obedient servant  
H. BLEECKER

This sent Brodhead on his way across the Channel full of a hope which did not die although he had to pass many months of waiting before permission to examine the historical papers of the British Museum was granted.

The result of his researches among the archives of the three nations, his work in which covered a number of years, was brought together with accuracy and completeness and formed in



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time a well-known book, Romeyn Brodhead's life work, entitled, "The Colonial History of the State of New York."

In the fall of the year 1841, Bleecker wrote my father, enclosing a letter to the secretary of the St. Nicholas Society:

Mr. Robert James is with me. He thinks of remaining a month or two. He takes Mr. Brodhead's place for the present.

"I send a St. Nicholas letter. The thoughts are suggested principally by what I see here. It may be questionable whether they should be published as coming from me, but it would seem hard that an American diplomatic agent may not to his country-men praise his own country. . . . Mr. Davezac will probably be with you. My best regards to him. Messrs. Lansing and Brodhead must contribute to the interest of your celebration. I wish you would have an appointed toast to the memory of Lafayette, who is neglected and forgotten in Europe.

To Mr. Robert H. Pruyn, Secretary of the Albany St. Nicholas Society:

The Hague, 29th, Oct. 1841.

Dear Sir;

The day is approaching on which you and so many of our friends unite in a festive remembrance of the Fatherland, and of our ancestors who introduced European civilization into that fair portion of the New World which we now inhabit.

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. . . In contemplating the history of our State, we, naturally, dwell on its marked successive periods: when it was a Dutch colony; when it was subject to Great Britain; when it had emerged from the colonial State;—and then the time subsequent to the establishment of the union of the new States,—the crowning epoch—since which it has advanced by rapid strides to its present greatness;—the blessed union!—dear to the wise and good of our common country, and interesting to the enlightened philanthropists of all other countries, which has already outlived the fears of friends and the predications of fact; which is much less liable to dissolution than superficial misinformers and hostile thinkers imagine; and for the endurance of which we believe we may with a reliance on a benignant Providence, trust to the intelligence and patriotism of our people! Though we are aware that “in the existence of nations a century is but a day” the glorious success of the past affords us confidence for the future.

The first period of our State history has been briefly but philosophically described by the historian to whom his country is much indebted for making its colonial condition better known at home and abroad, and who in giving an account of New Netherland has presented a true and perhaps as beautiful a picture of the Fatherland as any writer has drawn. But for this period we now have more ample materials than have heretofore been within the

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reach of the American Historian. The mission of Mr. Brodhead has been successful beyond expectations. He has examined about four hundred volumes and bundles of papers in the Archives of this country. Everything in this repository relating to the colony has been extracted (this has been a work of several months); and the manuscript when copied will form an addition to our State records exceeding four thousand foolscap pages.

It appears from Wagenaar's History of Amsterdam, that many of our ancestors emigrated from that city; and in its archives several documents relating to this colony have been found. Many papers respecting its ecclesiastical and civil affairs have also been obtained from the classis of Amsterdam.

In discovering and obtaining all these additional materials for our State history Mr. Brodhead has been assiduous and laborious and the public authorities have been prompt, friendly and liberal in affording him every facility.

The annual meeting of the Dutch Society of Fine Arts and Sciences was recently held at Rotterdam. At the dinner a toast was given in honor of our country and fine speeches were made expressing a warm interest in it, and especially in our State and city. The mission for amplifying our historical documents was commended as highly honorable to our State government.

I congratulate the Society on the great and continued prosperity of our happy land; and

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devotedly hope that it will not be interrupted by the evils inseparable from war; of which it is time that the civilized world should be weary. From the very foundation of the national government several Presidents have from time to time admonished us, that in our intercourse with other powers, we should be governed by the pure and immutable principles of private morality; render justice in all cases; and ask nothing that is not clearly right. Our happy position and circumstances do not allow us any excuse if indeed anything can, for the least departure from the obligation of justice and right. May we ever scrupulously adhere to them! and if war must come, may it, on our part, be clearly just, necessary, and unavoidable! and then, however much we may offer, it will require no extraordinary sagacity to foresee the final result.

Be good enough to express my warm regards to the members of the Society, and to offer for me as a toast what I trust may be considered a national sentiment:

“Nothing that is not clearly right.”

I am, with much esteem, your friend,

H. BLEECKER.

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WITH the defeat of Martin Van Buren in November, 1840, when again nominated for the Presidency, Bleecker decided that his work as representative of the United States to the Netherlands might properly end. He therefore wrote the President:

The Hague, 25th Jan. 1841.

My dear Sir,

I have read the Message with much pleasure; it is just what it should be. I am glad that you retire with so much grace, dignity and honor. The next four years will probably afford new evidence of the justness of your views. The message has been translated into French here; but care seems to have been taken to omit the strong passage respecting the evil consequences of a national debt. Some parts of it have also appeared in the Dutch papers.

Things appear a little better here, since the new reign; but the pressure of the debt and taxes is forcibly felt, and cannot be easily or speedily diminished. The old King abdicated, almost as Mr Caldwell said old John Thurman died, 'with the consent of his neighbors and acquaintances and his friends in particular', and yet, two years ago, he was idolized.

I have written to the Secretary of State concerning my recall; but I can explain myself more fully in a private letter to you. Had you

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remained in office I might not have asked it so soon. If I now remained silent on the subject, I should probably be recalled by your successor. Tho' I pass my time here in many respects agreeably, and have been treated with much kindness and attention, I think it will be better for me to return home in the autumn than to remain here longer. If I can leave this country in the Spring or Summer, I may avail myself of the interval to travel a little before I go home. There will be time enough after the receipt of this letter for my recall during your administration. But I submit the matter entirely to what you may think proper under the circumstances. I suppose there is no provision for an outfit for a successor, and that consequently a new appointment cannot speedily be made. If on this account, tho' weary of my appointment, or for any other cause you think the affair should be left to your successor, I shall be entirely satisfied. I can if necessary at any time renew the application to him. If I should not soon be discharged from this post, I can again if I wish, make a little excursion in the summer. I do not know anything of the views or wishes of the other diplomatic gentlemen who have been appointed during your administration. In regard to myself, tho' I desire to be at liberty to go home in the autumn, I am not very strenuous about it & I desire more that what is proper as to you and myself should be done. This seems to me more important than the difference



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of some months in the time of my return. May we be spared to pass many happy days on the blessed banks of our beautiful Hudson!

If you have a moment's leisure—not otherwise—let me hear from you. I see that there has been a meeting of tobacco planters at Washington. The subject of increased duties on that article will be considered by the 2d Chamber of the States General at their next session in the month of March. I am pretty confident that the proposed law will not be adopted. I have done what I thought I could with propriety do in relation to it by conversing with members and otherwise. . . . I thank you most heartily for the appointment. I have found the situation much more agreeable than I thought it would be on my *official* arrival here. Indeed, my Dutch origin and some acquaintance with the language and history of the country have afforded me peculiar advantages.

. . . . .  
It is pleasing to hear Hollanders express regret that you have not been re-elected. It gratified their national pride that a Dutchman was President of the United States. The Princess of Orange, a person of considerable character, talked a good deal about you last evening,—inquired to what part of the country you belonged, and other particulars. His Majesty has been kind and polite enough to express his regret that they would probably lose me in consequence of your not being re-elected.



LOOKING FROM STATE STREET NORTH ON PEARL STREET, ALBANY, 1905

*The two-gabled house beyond the old Elm Tree Corner is "the Vanderheyden Palace,"*



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You have a season of quiet approaching. I see no reason why it should not, and hope it will be, a happy one. The change will be great, but the thought of it need not disturb you.

My best regards to all your family.

Your friend

H. BLEECKER

Martin Van Buren

President of the United States.

Be good enough to present my best regards to Mr. Wright.

Bleecker also wrote a letter to Silas Wright, who was United States Senator from New York and living in Washington, to which Mr. Wright replied:

Washington.

My dear Sir,—

Your most acceptable letter of the 26th of May reached me a long time since, I think about the 20th June, but I have delayed an answer to it, because I have been very busy, and because I supposed it would be near the fall before you would be in London to receive the answer which I might give. I will now give you a hasty reply and a frank answer.

In the first place, the Minister who told you it would be due from you to Mr. Van Buren to resign, if he should not be re-elected (and I am glad you have not named him to me) was either more fastidious than wise, or knew you and your unyielding faith to your friends, better than he did the fair consequences of a

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Presidential election at home. There was no such obligation upon you or him, either in friendship, in morals, or in politics. He was mistaken, therefore, in his instruction to you.

I rejoice, however, as your friend, if you will permit me to call you so, and I feel sure that you will, that this diplomatist did so instruct you, because it prompted you to show that faith to your and my friend, the late President, and in a recorded form, and enabled him to return that evidence of faith and confidence in you, which would not otherwise have existed, while the correspondence thus occasioned had no influence whatever upon your recall.

Your letter gave me the first evidence of this correspondence between yourself and Messrs. Van Buren and Forsyth, and it explained what had been a sort of mystery to me before. Mr. Hughes was nominated by the President to take the place of yourself *removed*. That did not surprise me. As the known friend of Mr. Van Buren, I supposed you would be subjected to that fate, and as your friend, as I say again, I had no other regret than for the public service and the credit of the country.

My surprise was occasioned by seeing in the Albany Argus a notice of the nomination of Mr. Hughes in your place, with the remark that the editor understood you had requested to be recalled. I made inquiry here and could find no confirmation of that suggestion; and indeed the nomination of the President contradicted it, because it is the universal practice

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to specify the occasion for the nomination, such as in the place of A. resigned, of B. deceased, of C. removed, or of D. requesting to be recalled.

Your letter did not reach me until some time after Mr. Hughes' nomination had been confirmed, and therefore I had not the benefit of its information for that action; but it gives me the greatest pleasure to say to you that not a breath of charge, or imputation, was made against you, or the discharge of your official duties, in the whole proceeding. My position has been such as to enable me to speak with perfect certainty upon this point, as I am a member of the Committee on Commerce of the Senate, to which the nomination of Mr. Hughes, in your place, was referred. I demanded from the Committee that a call upon the department of State should be made for charges against you, if there were any, and it was cheerfully complied with. No charges were forwarded, or pretended to exist, but the majority of the Committee, being politically opposed to me, reported in favor of Mr. Hughes' nomination, and the majority of the Senate, being politically the same, confirmed it.

A conversation, rather than a debate, took place upon the action of the Senate in this case, but, being under injunction of secrecy, I am not at liberty to repeat it to you. I am, however, at liberty to say, or rather I will take the liberty to say, that not a word, or breath, either of direct imputation, or of side way in-



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sinuation, was uttered against you personally or officially.

Indeed there was a broad tacit admission that the charge was political only, and that you, as the political friend of Mr. Van Buren, should be superceded by a modern whig. This is the whole length and breadth and extent of the affair, both in fact and in form and appearance.

If I had not, since March 1841, seen so many other honest and pure and worthy men, in the public service both at home and abroad, stricken down in the same way, and for the same cause, I should have been incensed in your case, but experience has schooled me to the most perfect philosophy towards such proceedings, which all my observation, since that singular and disgraceful political contest of 1840, has gone to confirm the conviction, to which the result itself gave rise, that it was better that all our honest public agents should be at home, and out of office, that the cry of "the spoils" might be averted, and that they might be able, without that prejudice, to exert every patriotic influence in their power upon the mind of our great, and honest, but misguided public mind.

I do not despair of the Republic, but I assure you that I have felt, within the year now past, and still feel, an anxiety on its account, which I have never before known. The state of things at home is dreadful, and in a political sense more than in a financial. I think the people are awakened to their dangers and that they

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will recover their ground speedily, if not this fall, at the expiration of two years from it.

I have not time nor space to go into detail to you, and you will be at home so soon that it would be unwise if I had. Of one thing I am fully able to assure you, and that is that your fellow citizens of our proud state, and especially of the portion of it at and about your residence, will greet your return with a welcome as warm and as cordial as if you had not returned to them a *removed* public agent.

With the highest Regard

I am Most Truly Yours,

SILAS WRIGHT.

Hon. Harmanus Bleecker.

Having fully made up his mind to leave the Hague, Bleecker set about arranging for his departure. He first sent a letter to the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

Office of the Legation of the  
United States at The Hague,  
18th August, 1842.

Sir:

I have the honor to inform your Excellency that the President has permitted me to return to the United States; and I respectfully request to be informed of the time and place, at which I may be admitted to present my letter of recall to your Excellency.

I have long cherished a warm attachment to the country of my descent, and felt, and shall

HARMANUS BLEECKER

continue to feel, a deep interest in its history and fortunes. It has been my happiness to pass upwards of three years in it; and I cannot leave it, without expressing my heart-felt gratitude for the peculiarly kind manner in which I was received here, the very friendly sentiments which have been, invariably, manifested towards me, and the expression of regret which my approaching departure has occasioned.

I owe and offer to your Excellency my sincere thanks and acknowledgments for the proofs of confidence which you have been pleased to afford me in all the intercourse which I have had the occasion and honor to have with your Excellency, and the agreeable and obliging manner in which that intercourse has been conducted.

And I hope I may avail myself of this occasion to express my warm thanks for the marked kindness and friendly attentions I have received from your Excellency, in your private capacity, during my residence in this city.

I desire also to tender to the other officers of this Government with whom I have had occasional intercourse, my acknowledgments for their uniform courtesy.

I pray your Excellency to communicate to the King the expression of my respectful gratitude for the marks of kindness with which he has been pleased, on many occasions, to honor me.

With the inadequate expression of the lively gratitude and the deep regret with which I

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leave the Netherlands, I renew to your Excellency the assurance of the distinguished consideration with which I have the honor to be

Your obedient and  
obliged Servant,

H. BLEECKER

His Excellency  
The Baron Huyssen  
of Kattendyke,  
Minister of Foreign  
Affairs of His  
Majesty The King  
of The Netherlands.

Mr. Bleecker then took up, one by one, various other duties. He had hired his house for a period of which six months still remained; so he looked about among his acquaintances to find someone to take it off his hands. In the proper fashion of the diplomat and in his kind and courteous manner, he then started forth to make his farewells, beginning with an audience with the King. Visits, official and social, together with his work at the legation, occupied much of his time for two or three weeks. Mr. James Beekman, who had been his fellow traveler on his first journey to Holland in the winter of 1839, had returned there in order to study Dutch and after Mr. Robert James's departure had served for a while as secretary, but by this time he too had gone on

his way, and Mr. Bleecker was obliged to close his work at the Hague alone.

Certain expressions in letters written to Albany about this time suggest that in spite of all his interests, duties and pleasures, there were hours when Bleecker longed intensely for a sight of home faces. At one time he wrote: "I miss Mr. James very much and live in great solitude. I desire to see a little of Germany this summer tho' I am just as well satisfied in being quiet at home and the objection to going away in the summer is that it is just the season in which Americans—rare birds—come to Holland."

Every bit of news from Albany seemed to be of great moment to him and, indeed, some of it was far from dull! "We are all in a state of excitement", wrote Maria Brinckerhoff, "with the proposal to build a bridge across the river opposite the city. . . . The Trojans are up in arms and declare if the Albanians build it they will come in a body to cut it down. This will not deter the proceedings, however."

Among the many people to whom Mr. Bleecker paid a visit of farewell was the Mentz family. Mr. Dirck Mentz was an officer of that department of the government having the superintendence of canals and dykes, and to his daughter

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Mr. Bleecker had been teaching English for two years. Evidently the friendship between this family and the attractive diplomatic representative of the United States had been one of constant growth, and he looked with regret to a separation. The tale of his farewell visit is best told in a letter which he wrote soon after its occurrence, the letter giving unexpected and delightful news to his Albany friends.

The Hague, 24th Sept., 1842.

My dear Sir;

You will be surprised to find that I am still here, and more at the cause. I sent the library I have collected here and some other things, several weeks since, to Rotterdam, to be shipped to New York, and had prepared everything for my departure hence on the 29th of August. About two hours before I was to start, I called on Miss Cornelia Mentz to bid her farewell forever,—having the day before finished all other leave-taking; when instead of parting we agreed to remain together during life. We have been acquainted upwards of three years and not without mutual interest; but I thought myself too old for her and too old to be married. I have wished that I had such a daughter as an object of interest and a companion; but the feeling I had for her was not expressed, and had it not been for the emotion occasioned by taking leave, probably would never have been



known to her. I then found that without any designed effort I had won her affections, and those of her parents. The objection to our union, on account of my age, was fully presented by me. I could not *urge* her to leave her home and parents on my account. But it was decided that she must go with me to America, in October. A day or two afterwards as she and her parents had made a great sacrifice for me, and as I had the house I have lived in the greater part of the time I have been here, on my hands till the spring, my servant who had agreed to take it when I should go away, not being able to pay the rent,—I determined to gratify Miss Mentz and her parents by remaining here till the spring. We were married on the 14th instant, according to law, in this city, in the City-Hall, in the forenoon. In the afternoon there was according to the custom here, a religious service called the *inzegening*, in Church. In the evening my wife left the paternal roof for mine. She is the daughter of Mr. D. Mentz, Inspector of the Water-staat; is 28 years old, tho' she looks not more than two or three and twenty; not without personal beauty—of rather striking appearance, with a fine figure; but her attraction to me is her moral beauty. She is religious with, what is to me a great comfort, a wise disregard of dogmas of human invention. She knows French about as well as her own language, and German as a written language, reads English easily, and learns fast to speak it. She is fond

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of and persevering in study. The representative of the 18 millions has become a school master with one pupil, who will learn more than a little of our language and literature before she embarks for the new world. And now, having the bird, I must think of a cage to put her in. I suppose I must take one of my houses in Chapel Street, as those in Pearl Street produce more rent, which I may as well save. The north house is in some respects preferable; but as the other was not let, when you last wrote, it will be most judicious to take the one least likely to be let. It must be put in good order tho' with as little expense as possible. Mr. Lyman must see to this. I had considered the question of keeping house before I had any thought of having a wife. Now there is no question about it, especially as Mrs. B. does not like to live otherwise, and I live to please her.

The motives to marriage, at my time of life, are somewhat different from those of younger persons. I am now relieved from the deep solitude in which I have passed so much (time) by a lovely and intelligent companion.

I cannot be sufficiently grateful for the manner in which I have been treated during my residence in this country, and in which the intelligence of my recall was received. My friends would be much gratified if they knew it all.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

Mr. Brodhead came hither all the way from Paris to be present at my marriage.

Be good enough to present my regards to my cousins the Lansings, and inform them of my marriage.

Your friend,  
H. BLEECKER.

Mr. J. V. L. Pruyn.

There were no more lonely days now for Mr. Bleeker. The naïve request in one of his early letters to Albany for Noah Webster's philosophical grammar or Bullion's Latin grammar may have been made for other reasons than merely that the books should lie on the legation's writing table to insure the use of correct phrases in diplomatic correspondence!

Even more interesting particulars than appear in this letter were told my father by Mr. Bleeker when he reached home.

The story went that having in the parlor bade farewell to the weeping Cornelia Sebastiana Mentz, Mr. Bleeker, accompanied by Mr. Mentz, left the room and walked to the street door. There he paused and said to his host: "I notice that your daughter seems unhappy at my departure. She is very dear to me. If I were twenty years younger I should dare to tell her so

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and ask her to be my wife.” To this Mr. Mentz replied that he did not think the difference in their ages would affect his daughter; whereupon, happy Mr. Bleecker turned back and disappeared within the parlor door. . . .

Such news was too good for Bleecker to keep. A letter announcing his marriage was also sent at once from the Hague to Kinderhook, where Martin Van Buren, who had exchanged the White House for his farm “Lindenwald”, was living. This devoted friend replied:

Lindenwald

Dec. 13th, 1842

My dear Sir,

The multiplied & unceasing duties attendant upon a Farmer's life have caused me to defer the acknowledgment of your very agreeable letter longer than I intended, or should have done. From the bottom of my heart do I congratulate you upon your marriage, & I do so, with the strongest conviction, that your happiness will be essentially promoted by the act. To bring to this country a wife from the land of our forefathers, and such a one as you would, only, choose, is, of itself, a great matter. I wish whilst your hand was in, you had selected one for me also, and, as that may not be done, I shall press you hard to purchase yourself a place in my neighborhood. I have during the present year made a journey of 6800 miles,

passing through twenty states and one Territory, & I can conscientiously say, that a more desirable situation I have not met with any where. The interest I take in farming is intense, & increases daily—to it, politics are if not altogether given up, certainly rendered only of secondary interest. Be assured that you could not spend the remainder of your days more pleasantly than to become a Kinderhook farmer, located on the Banks of the Hudson. By the bye, will it not fall in your way to procure for us some reminiscences of the first settlement of this place. It is nearly as old as Albany. If you decide upon becoming a farmer, bring for each of us a first rate Dutch Cow.

Your allusions to my conduct in respect to yourself are very gratifying but I assure you that the act, from public as well as private consideration, brought its own reward with it. If any thing, on the part of the medley which succeeded to power in the shameful proceedings of 1840, could have surprised us, it would have been your recall. They could not well have done an act better calculated to hold up to the scorn & derision of the community, the insincerity of the professions with which they went into the contest. You will have seen before this time, that we have literally annihilated them in this State; & Massachusetts has more recently thrown off the dominion of Whiggery. Of all the states, Kentucky, Vermont & Delaware, are now the only ones, in which their Flag is still flying. At no period in our history

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has that interest been more depressing, than it now is. Full of confidence, & desirous of saving Mr. Clay's nomination from the hazard of a convention, the leading Whigs, & whig paper had every where taken open ground agt.' holding one—insisting that Mr. Clay was sufficiently designated as the Whig candidate. The N. York election however produced an instant change in their position, & they are now all for a Convention, Mr. Clay's own paper at Lexington, as it is called, taking the lead. On our side there are several names before the people, & the arrival of our friend Gen. Cass has added another, & from appearances, the most likely one. You will see in my letter to Mr. Horn the ground I occupy, which is that of non-interference, satisfied with what the country has already done for (me) and prepared to acquiesce contentedly in its decision in regard to the future, without lifting a finger to influence the matter one way or the other. It is not for me to speak of the indiscretions of the democratic mind, other than to say that I see nothing in them to complain of. The opposition are obviously unanimous in preferring any other opponent than myself.

If an opportunity presents itself have the goodness to cause me to be respectfully remembered to the old King, & do the same thing for me, kindly & most affectionately, to Mr. & Mrs. Huygens, & to their family. I rejoice to learn from you that they are well. A worthier family does not exist. The Major and Angelica are



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about building a tasty cottage on the Bank of the River on an elevated spot at Stuyvesant, where I first intended to make an establishment for myself. Cannot Mrs. Bleecker, & yourself, select a handsome dutch name for it?

Present me very kindly to her, & tell her she may expect a hearty reception from her, & your friend,

M. VAN BUREN

H. Bleecker, Esq.

Great must have been the interest in Albany when Harmanus Bleecker brought home, in July, 1843, his Dutch wife and many the dinner parties and tea parties given in her honor.

All up the hill, from river to Capitol, the small city must have been lively with curiosity and the quiet of Chapel Street disturbed by the many friends wishing to be among the first to call upon the happy bride. In those days Albany took seriously the prompt paying and formal receiving of visits, and even though a guest called at noon, every hostess was prepared to offer sherry and cakes on a silver tray.

A word of welcome from Martin Van Buren awaited them:

Allow me to congratulate Mrs Bleecker and you upon your arrival & to say to you that it will afford me sincere pleasure to receive a visit from you at any time that will suit your  
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Chapel-Street, 26<sup>th</sup> Dec.

Dear Sir,

It was held before I left home, that a trust to pay over the rents & profits of lands, was not equivalent to a trust to apply rents & profits to the use of a person. Has this been altered by statute or otherwise?

Your friend,

H. Bleeker



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own convenience. I propose to make a short visit to Saratoga about the first of August & with that exception expect to be at home all the rest of the season.

Mrs. Bleecker readily adapted herself to Albany life, and even to the critical, who thought no one too good for Mr. Bleecker, gave satisfaction. She was of a sympathetic, lively nature, possessing the gift of making friends and keeping them and her later letters show that she grew very much attached to this country and its customs.

Six happy years did their married life last, and, except for a journey to the Hague in 1847 to see Mrs. Bleecker's parents, these years passed in tranquil fashion; in occasional visits to the Sedgwicks at Stockbridge, to Martin Van Buren at Kinderhook and to others who lived even somewhat farther away, and in the enjoyment of their Albany friends.

In *Munsell's Annals* a brief sketch of Harmanus Bleecker described him as a man of engaging manners and irresistible dignity. He returned to the United States with the same simple tastes which had characterized him before he left home, unspoiled by his diplomatic career in the Netherlands. But his experiences there were never afterwards far from his thoughts and, until

his death, he corresponded in Dutch with many people at the Hague and Amsterdam for whom he had come to have high regard.

I see him, as the years passed, forgetting the less attractive part of his days in Holland and dwelling upon the recollection of those things that brought delight and satisfaction, and I feel that on his quiet walks about Albany, although the old life flowed round him again, his thoughts must often have wandered across the sea to the Hague and that he imagined himself strolling along the path by the beautiful Vyver and under the trees of the broad Voorhout.

Some years after Harmanus Bleecker's death, Romeyn Brodhead wrote of him: "He chose for his motto the Dutch word, Eenvoudigheid or Simplicity. It was very characteristic of the man."



HARMANUS BLEECKER  
ABOUT 1845

*From a miniature belonging to Mrs. William Gorham Rice*





## GIFT TO ALBANY

Harmanus Bleecker died July 19, 1849, after a short illness, and was buried in the Albany Rural Cemetery.

Shortly after his death Mrs. Bleecker returned to her mother in the Hague. About two years later she married a distant cousin, Hendrik Coster, who had many years before been in love with her. They came to Albany with the idea of making it their home, as Mrs. Coster had retained a deep attachment for the city, and for her circle of friends there. But the customs and climate of this country were not attractive to Mr. Coster, and after only a short stay, they wisely decided to return to the Netherlands. There at Arnhem, in 1885, over thirty years later, Mrs. Coster died.

Harmanus Bleecker left all his property for the use of his wife, with the verbal understanding between them that such property, upon her death, should be applied in some judicious way to be permanently beneficial to the city of Albany.

Before returning to the Netherlands to live, Mrs. Coster executed a deed of trust covering the disposition of Mr. Bleecker's property after the

death of herself and her husband, Mr. Coster.  
This deed of trust provided:

“That the party of the third part (John V. L. Pruyn) will faithfully apply the said property and all the net proceeds thereof on the termination of the life estates therein . . . in such way and manner as he . . . shall deem most judicious or advisable in order to carry out the views and wishes of Harmanus Bleecker as hereinbefore referred to.”

My father died before Mrs. Coster, and my grandfather, Amasa J. Parker, succeeded to the Trust. After Mrs. Coster's death, Judge Parker offered the funds derived from the property—which had increased in value to \$130,000—to the Young Men's Association of the city of Albany, for the erection of a public hall and library building, provided the Association should raise, to be added to it, the sum of \$50,000. The conditions were complied with, and as a result, Harmanus Bleecker Hall was constructed. Thirty-five years afterwards the Hall was sold, and with the money received from that sale, the present Harmanus Bleecker Library was built.

LETTERS WRITTEN BY HARMANUS BLEECKER  
FROM THE HAGUE

Many other letters relating to business matters and not of special interest passed between Mr. Bleecker and my father.

The Hague, 11th Oct., 1839.

A thousand thanks, my dear Sir, for your kind letter of the 23d of August, and your many other kind offices. You and Mr. Bloodgood write to me just what I wish to hear. . . . Mr. Brodhead has not arrived. I am not fond of speaking of things in this way—as is often done too lightly—but there seems to be a providence in his coming now. He is very amiable and therefore I desired him to travel (with) me. I was very much favored by the companionship of Mr Beekman and Mr Duyckinck last winter in Paris, on the journey hither, and several weeks here last winter. Mr B. has lately come again to learn Dutch. He is just now on an excursion through the country. He is a fine specimen of a rich young American, without false pride, ostentation or show—and with a just estimate of what is worthy and valuable.

. . . . .  
You cannot imagine how they are pleased here, with the St. Nicholas feast. It is quite a matter of national importance; and has been very useful to me. I hope therefore you will exert yourselves to render the next as interesting and imposing as possible. One of the first men in the government and country spoke, a few days ago, of what they would see of it in Albany. Mr. Davezac told me he would be there. I have given him

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a letter to you, Mr Webb and Mr Bloodgood. He is an exceedingly kind and intelligent man, and filled a great space in Society here. I hope you will all do what you can to make Albany agreeable to him. He has many friends and correspondents here, and therefore by giving him a favorable impression of the character and intelligence of Albany, you will do a service to our city. Be good enough to have this understood. He will make a speech, and give interest to your celebration. You will find him an interesting companion.

Your friend,

H. BLEECKER.

John V. L. Pruyn, Esq.

The Hague, 8th November, 1839.

My dear Sir,

You enquire about the forms of worship in the Established Church. There is now here no Established church. All the churches are supported by the Government, but the Catholics receive less than the Protestants, and a few congregations of what are called the very strict orthodox receive no support from the Government, but are proceeding on the voluntary system. Who knows what may come out of this good beginning! In what was formerly the Established Church, and whose creed you know is Calvinistic—the Confession of the Synod of Dort—some of the clergy still adhere to their original standards, but in general the discussion of the doctrinal points which occasioned, and were settled by the Synod of Dort, is avoided. Lately, a book was written by a minister of what is here called the Reformed Church, which was the Established Church before the Revolution of 1795, in answer to a prize question put forth by a Society, one of whose objects is the promotion

## LETTERS

of Theological knowledge—"In what consists the Essence of Christianity?" and which as it obtained the prize offered, is to be taken as an indication, to some extent, at least, of the religious opinions prevailing here. This work, written in a spirit of candor, and moderation, and displaying considerable theological knowledge, is intended to show that many of the doctrines about which Protestants have been divided, are not of the Essence of Christianity. It is not to be understood however, from the fact that this Book gained the prize, that all the clergy subscribe to all the views of the Author; but I believe that except among those who are the zealous and open advocates for the strict Calvinistic doctrines, the general tone and spirit of the work are approved of. The Government of the church, except in so far as it is connected with the Government of the State, is considerably like that of the Dutch church in the United States, though there is a good deal of difference in the Government of the churches in large cities from that in our large cities. For instance in The Hague there are four of the Reformed Churches, (in one of which the French language is used) which are governed by one Consistory and have nine or ten ministers, who officiate in all the churches in rotation, excepting in the French church, to which the labors of two of these Clergymen are particularly confined. The Clergy are very much respected. They are men of excellent character and great propriety of conduct. Their sermons are elaborately studied, very methodical and though many of them are read, they are all delivered in an animated manner. Many of the ministers have the reputation of superior talents, and are considered very accomplished preachers. Almost every gentleman here



wears some decoration. The order of the Netherlands Lion is conferred on ministers and several of them wear the badge of this order. It is also conferred on physicians and other civilians.

The prescribed forms of Baptism and Marriage are not invariably used. The Consistory of Groningen have adopted a form of marriage which is now in use there and one of the Clergymen uses a form of baptism of his own; but here, as far as I have observed, the old form of baptism is always adhered to. A member of the church in one of the large cities told me that he did not believe some of the doctrines contained in the prescribed form of Baptism, and that when his children were baptized the minister omitted the parts of the form of which he did not approve, and that he thought that one-third of the ministers of the Reformed Church of that place, held the same religious opinions that he did.

Public service is conducted in this manner. In the *Kerke Briefjes* \* of which I have sent you specimens, and which are distributed on Saturday evening, to show in which church the respective Ministers will preach, the time of the commencement of the service is mentioned, about 20 minutes before which, the clerk (*voorzitter*) begins the service by reading the Decalogue in the forenoon, in the afternoon the creed and generally the chapter from which the text is taken; he then gives out a Psalm and if the minister has not arrived, continues reading the Scriptures, until the minister comes in, which is exactly the time indicated in the Briefje. The Congregation assemble before and during this portion of the service. Generally the minister begins by a short prayer and uttering the Benediction, and then he

\* See appendix No. 2.

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gives out a Psalm. Then follows another prayer, rather shorter than with us; though the concluding prayer is longer, before which there is sometimes an Exordium Remotum, but this is more generally omitted. After this the Minister announces the text, and either then or after announcing the divisions of his subject, he makes some observations upon the claims of the poor, and the maintenance of the church. Then two Deacons go around with separate bags, one for the poor, the other for the church expenses, to which bags little bells are appended. At the conclusion of a head of the discourse the minister frequently pauses and gives out a part of a Psalm or Hymn suited to the subject of the sermon which the congregation sing. After the conclusion of the sermon, the services proceed the same way as with us in America.

In the afternoon the Heidelberg catechism is always preached from. The ministers are generally strong healthy men with loud voices. They wear a small three-cornered hat—a band (bef)—single-breasted coat with standing collar, and small clothes, and a long band about six inches broad, of black cloth, fastened with a hook to the collar of the coat instead of a gown. The clerk generally wears the same costume, except the cocked hat,—single breasted coat and small clothes. All the churches have organs, and all the congregation join in singing, which is nearly as loud as it was in the time of Daniel Van Antwerp in the old church in Albany. The churches in the old cathedral style, are adapted to the Protestant service as well as they can be, and those built since the reformation are exceedingly plain. There are pews along and near the walls a little elevated above the floor, generally occupied by males—the greater part

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of the floor is filled with chairs on which the women sit. Seats can be hired by the year or can be paid for, to the women whose business it is to receive the money, each time they are occupied.

The benedictions are pronounced at the commencement and conclusion of the services by the minister as in our churches.

There is no fire in the churches except in footstoves with turf, for the women and such men as choose to have them. The Remonstrants warm their churches. About one-third of the inhabitants of Holland are Catholics. You will find an account of the numbers of the other sects in the *Encyclopedia Americana* Art. Netherlands. The National Synod sits with closed doors.

Your friend,

H. BLEECKER

The Hague, 12th Nov., 1839.

My dear Sir:

The mail goes from Rotterdam to London every Wednesday. On Tuesday, the 29th, I sent among other things my toast and letter for the St. Nicholas dinner, to go by the *British Queen* on the 1st instant.

In my letter about churches and ministers, I believe I forgot to mention the pay of the ministers. In the largest cities they do not receive half as much as the most important of ours in New York. So much for the voluntary system! I believe few here have more than \$1,000. This is considered about the maximum.

Your friend,

H. BLEECKER.

John V. L. Pruyn, Esq.

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The Hague, 9th Dec., 1839.

My dear Sir:

The Rev Dr de Witt of New York has written to me for information concerning the church here. I have answered his letter; but to save time, which is very precious with me, I have told him, that if he desired it, you would send him a copy of the letter to you, about the forms of worship &c.

I was exceedingly shocked and grieved to hear of the death of Mr. Sedgwick.\* I have never known a man of more singleness and purity—of more benignity of nature. It seemed to be his business to care for the happiness and welfare of others—of his friends, his country, his race. Noble-mindedness and disinterestedness marked his character; moral courage and independence were part of the daily beauty of his life. He acted up to what he had deliberately decided to be right, though his most esteemed and nearest friends differed from him. This was shown, among other instances in his recent political course. He was not a partizan in the ordinary sense of the word; but believing the administration to be right in its leading and characteristic policy, he thought it his duty openly and decidedly to support it without any thought of, or reference to his personal interests. He has written a good deal that is practically useful and valuable, with a characteristic plainness. The volume entitled Political & Private Economy founded on observations made in England is an exceedingly useful work. I believe

\* His old friend and former law partner had died suddenly in Pittsfield.

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it has been republished in whole or in part in the London Examiner. He had striking peculiarities; but as to faults, in a moral aspect, few men have less.

Your friend,

H. BLEECKER.

J. V. L. Pruyn, Esq.

The Hague, 13th February, 1840.

My dear Sir:

I am much obliged for your attention and kindness in regard to the St. Nicholas affair. As you keep a book of the proceedings of the Society for posterity, I will send you one of the papers you sent me with corrections which you may make in your book, as possibly some of your descendants may have the curiosity to read your records. The papers distributed here have been corrected. There was one mistake which it was important to rectify; and I suppose it has been considered a mere error of the press. The present King is not William the 4th, but the 1st. In the order of succession, as Stadholder, he would have been William the 6th; but as he is the 1st *King*, he is of course William the 1st. I had an audience yesterday for the purpose of presenting to him the President's message. He is strong and healthy. In about a month the 2nd Chamber of the States General will reassemble. They adjourned to give His Majesty an opportunity to propose amendments to the constitution; but he is evidently disinclined to any important change; and I do not think it probable that they will go far in proposing changes. Nothing can be done without the concurrence of the 1st Chamber and the King. The 1st Chamber is a body, the members of which are appointed



## LETTERS

for life by the King. The frightful results of the French revolution, and the violence and crime which mingle so much with efforts in favor of liberty, in Europe, are great obstacles to the progress of improvement and liberal institutions.

We have had scarcely any cold here this winter; and the weather is now so mild and soft that the elms are sprouting. There is no snow. The disagreeable characteristic of the climate of this part of Europe is the moisture. There is much gaiety here, in the way of balls and parties. I go to them as I did at home, to pass half an hour. . . .

When you see Mr. Jacob J. Lansing, present my best regards to him and desire him to remember me to his family and sisters. Make an apology for my not writing. There are many many friends I ought to write to, but if they knew how much I work in this way, they would indulge me. . . .

Tell Mr. Kane that I am exceedingly obliged to him for his letter. It was just what I desired. He will gratify me by writing very frequently.

Your friend,

H. BLEECKER.

J. V. L. Pruyn, Esq.

The Hague, 21st January, 1841.

My dear Sir:

I am very much obliged to you for your kind letter of the 25th of Nov. last and for your attention to my affairs. . . . I could live very pleasantly with you in State Street, but with books I can live almost anywhere. I am just now reading one of the most in-



HARMANUS BLEECKER

structive works I ever read, Smyth's Lectures on Modern History.

There is nothing new here. The new King is popular. The prospects of continued peace in Europe and the value set on it are cheering. The national pride and vanity of the French have placed them in an unpleasant position. The fortification of Paris is now the great question. It seems to me to be inconsistent with the spirit of the age and a comprehensive philosophy. If the case could be supposed, that the spirit of absolutism would bring the rest of Europe on France to suppress the cause of true liberty, then it would be desirable that France should have every means of defence. But the true policy of the liberals in France is to improve their own country and people—to promote intelligence, morality and material improvement at home, gradually to improve their political institutions, and thus by their example exercise a moral influence over the other parts of the continent. This moral warfare will not render it necessary to fortify Paris. Had the revolution of 1789 proceeded rationally and justly, how many absolute governments would now have been left in Europe?

Your friend,

H. BLEECKER.

John V. L. Pruyn, Esq.

The Hague, 22d Feb., 1841.

My dear Sir;

. . . Be good enough to tell Mr. Gansevoort that I have received but one of his letters which is dated in December and for which I am very much obliged to him.

## LETTERS

. . . I think that *Lux Mundi* \* was not an *ecclesiastic*, as is stated in the accounts sent to me, tho a theologian. His not being an ecclesiastic increases the probability of the present Gansevoorts being descended from him. Mr Gockinga, the representative from Groningen, in the 2d Chamber, who lives opposite the Gansevoort house has promised me a drawing of the Coat of Arms. He will be here in the beginning of the next month. I will get what I can of the Life and Works of the great man.

. . . Mr Brodhead's speech has given great pleasure here. I sent you a copy of a newspaper in which it appears in French. . . .

Your friend,

H. BLEECKER.

J. V. L. Pruyn

The Hague, 8th May, 1841.

My dear Sir:

. . . . .  
Yesterday commenced the Kermis here an annual fair, which lasts about 10 days. At its commencement you are wished "a pleasant Kermis." Temporary erections are made for shops, theatrical and other exhibitions. It is an old custom; and no one seems to inquire whether it would not be better to be without it. There was a time when there was some occasion for such fairs. Now, they produce idleness and the consequent evils. Certain people are privileged to ask for gifts of money, as on New Years-day. The people on the continent think much less of what is convenient and

\* Wessel Gansevoort.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

useful than the Americans or the English. Amusement is their business; and is of much use to *some governments*.

Now and then an American appears here. I had three to dine with me last week.

I mentioned, some time ago, the injury done to books by mice. The Royal Librarian here says, that they gnaw books in consequence of thirst, and if they can find water, they will not injure books. I hope there is no lack of water for the little creatures in Stanwix Hall. If there be, it may be well to employ some one to supply them occasionally. The value of the books will justify the expense.\*

H. BLEECKER.

J. V. L. Pruyn esq.

The Hague, 27th Aug., 1841.

My dear Sir,

I am very much obliged to you for your letter of the 30th July. . . . I have not been out of this country this summer, and regretted exceedingly that I could not go with Mr. James and his family up the Rhine to Switzerland. I cannot expect such another opportunity. It would have been a most agreeable jaunt to me. But so many Americans now come here in the summer, that I have not felt myself at liberty to go from home. I am also detained by an unfortunate trouble of an American Capt. (Hatch) at Rotterdam, arising from a disturbance made on board of his ship by a sailor belonging to another. The Capt. threw a handspike at him; in consequence he fell with his head on the gunnel of a boat in the water, and died of the

\* Mr. Bleecker's library was stored in Stanwix Hall.

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injury he received. The Capt. has been in custody many weeks, but has not yet been brought to trial. . . .

Your friend,  
H. BLEECKER.

John V. L. Pruyn  
Counsellor at Law

The Hague, 10th Sept. 1841.

My dear Sir;

I have been very much gratified by the visit of Mrs. Van Rensselaer and her party to this place. It is a treat to me to have Americans, and especially friends, here.

I am glad to see that the Mayor of Albany is so sensible of the importance of grounds for health and recreation. On a large scale these are general in Europe, without the compact parts of cities. But you have also in the midst of many cities, large squares as in London and Glasgow. I wish our Mayor could be here to see the beautiful Bosch (Wood) near by and the Long and Wide Voorhout (Forewood) and the Vyver Berg within it. The middle of the Forewood is enclosed by iron rails between stone posts—but one rail between the posts. There are openings at intervals for foot passengers; carriages and horses are excluded. Trees stand inside of and near the fence. The rest of the area except one row of trees in the middle of the Wide Voorhout, is without trees or shrubbery, and is used as a public walk. In the widest parts of these streets, there are also trees outside of the fence. The Vyver Berg has trees and walks without any enclosure. In walking through the Long Voorhout with Albanians and other Americans acquainted with Albany, I have

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several times mentioned how much it might be improved and beautified, by making its very wide streets somewhat like this beautiful street of the Hague. The wide streets and trees make it so beautiful a place. In the widest part of Market Street \* and in State Street similar enclosures might be made with openings to cross with carriages and horses where necessary. As here, abundant space might be left on each side of the enclosure, between it and the side walks for carriages and horses. In State Street, this space might be macadamized. To save expense the posts and rails might be of wood. The enclosed parts, of course, would be without any pavement—sodded, with graveled walks. The present expense of frequently repairing the pavement would be saved. On this plan, you perceive, the middle of the street, instead of being the road, would be the enclosed part. If you were here, I think you would see the advantage of it. I am not aware of any objection to it, except that it might occasion some inconvenience in case of fires; but this would be slight if proper space were left on each side of the fence; and it is to be hoped that fires will cease to be so destructive and frequent as they have been in some of our cities. Such fires do not occur here, and all our cities are not subject to them. I write this now in consequence of seeing in an Albany paper, that it is proposed to macadamize the center of State Street. To have it enclosed and shaded by trees would certainly be more beautiful and I think more useful. The expense would be inconsiderable. . . .

Your friend

Mr. John V. L. Pruyn.

H. BLEECKER

\* Now Broadway.

## LETTERS

The Hague, 11th March, 1842.

My dear Sir,

The permission to examine the New York Colonial papers in the State-Paper office in London, has, at length, been granted. There has been much difficulty in obtaining it. If the opportunity to make the examination is not now taken advantage of, it may be that it will not again be conceded. Mr. Brodhead thinks the expense of making the copies required by the purpose of his mission may amount to \$3000 and says, that unless the Legislature makes an additional appropriation, the mission, so far as England is concerned, must prove abortive. The Governor will doubtless communicate the state of the business to the Legislature. If the mission was originally expedient and proper, it would seem to be a matter of regret that it should now be defeated. It may never be renewed. The State of Georgia, it is said paid upwards of \$2000 for copying papers required for its history. Mr. B's estimate of the cost of copying, is, of course, conjectural, and the amount must be very uncertain. It does not become me to say, that the mission was properly instituted, or ought now to be continued; but these questions are worthy of consideration. If you think so too, be good enough to present the matter to Messrs. Corning, Flagg, Young, Dix and such other gentlemen as you may think proper.

Your friend

H. BLEECKER.

Mr. John V. L. Pruyn.

P. S. If the needful appropriation be not made this session, Mr. Brodhead will, of course, give up the mission, as to England, and go home.

H. B.

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HARMANUS BLEECKER

The Hague, 27th May, 1842.

My dear Sir:

Before closing my last letter I heard of the appointment of Mr. Hughes. I am left at liberty to take leave of this government at any time, according to my convenience or to await his arrival. He is to get out on his mission, from the U. S., in the course of the summer. My present intention is to go on my excursion before taking leave here, to be absent about a month, and whether he be here or not on my return, to go to England soon and embark for home in the autumn. This will enable me to see a little more of England. There is a remote possibility that circumstances may occur to induce me to remain in Europe during the winter; but my present plans are without reference to such an event. Continue to address to the care of Miller, in London, as he will know my whereabouts. Mr. Hughes will probably not arrive till August. My chargé-ship will continue till I take leave here. I should like to receive newspapers while I remain abroad, if they can be sent without too much expense.

I am much gratified by the regret that is expressed here at my speedy departure; and tho' I have for some time past contemplated it, I have been quite sad since I received my recall. It is melancholy to take final leave of those to whom we are bound by kind offices. But then the thought of ascending the noble Hudson and beholding the domes of Albany cheers me. I pray for this blessing.

. . . Yesterday three of the Dutch Ministers of State were to dine with me, but in the morning came to them invitations to dinner from his Majesty; and I had to invite some other guests. The King I believe

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always invites the same day. It frequently happens that a person who has a dinner party is obliged not long before the dinner hour to revoke his invitations by receiving a Royal card. Such is Royalty; such the pride by which the superiority of Royal Persons is sustained.

Your friend,  
H. BLEECKER.

Mr. J. V. L. Pruyn.

The Hague, 3rd Aug., 1842.

My dear Sir,

I am much obliged to you for your letter of the 14th of July, and my account. . . . I am glad of what you say about State Street. The rational enjoyment afforded by open ground and public walks is much more valued in European than in American cities, especially, on the continent—they are, however, when spacious, generally, outside of the towns.

. . . I have made my southern excursion, and have seen a good deal of Rhinish Germany and Switzerland. I was, at Amsterdam, last week to take leave—rather a sad business. Notwithstanding my willingness to avail myself of the President's kind permission to return home, the peculiar and friendly manner in which I was received & have been treated here, and the regret that is now manifested at my departure, naturally occasion painful emotions. I have been considered as standing in a peculiar relation to the Dutch people, and have been associated with them as few other foreigners could be. I owe them much gratitude. Excuse the Egotism. I intend to go to England about the middle of this month, and shall probably go home—

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ward by the steamship of the 4th Oct.; the 22nd would suit me better in regard to the time I wish to pass in England; but it will be rather late for the voyage. Mr. J. C. Gevers goes to Washington to take Mr. Martini's place.\* He is much esteemed here. As it is possible that he may be at Albany before my return I have desired him, in that case, to call on you; and I beg you to introduce him to our friends. He has letters from the young Rensselaers to their brothers. He wishes very much to be at the St. Nicholas feast, but I have told him that the President's diplomatic dinner and the season will probably prevent his attendance.

He informs me that the Rensselaers with whom he has been on their journey from St. Petersburg through Germany, will go out on the G. W.† on the 22d. of Oct. My compliments to Mrs. Pruyn.

Your friend,

H. BLEECKER.

Mr. J. V. L. Pruyn.

The Hague, 11 Oct., 1842.

My dear Sir,

. . . . .  
Dr. Duhring has sent me a book for you on the Literature of the Netherlands. If I find an opportunity to send it to London, I will forward it before Spring. There is a great ado here just now about the marriage of the Princess Sophia, showing the beauty & blessings of royalty. Great presents are made to her by the cities of Amsterdam and the Hague; a great portion

\* As Chargé d'Affaires of the Netherlands.

† S. S. George Washington.

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of whose inhabitants are sunk in the deepest poverty. Having taken leave of the government I have escaped the troublesome attendance on ceremonies, royal talk and *gala* representations in the theatre. It is difficult, without witnessing them, to have a conception of the trifles and frivolities of the old world. And then, to think of the degradation and belittling of the people they produce! This makes the heart sick.

Your friend,

H. BLEECKER.

Mr. J. V. L. Pruyn.

Copy of letter to the Rev. Alexander Young, Boston.

The Hague, 22d Dec. 1841.

Sir,

I have long regarded the settlement of the Pilgrim Fathers in the new world as one of the most important and interesting events in history; and was much gratified when Mr Dixon handed me your Chronicles, and your letter to him dated the 30th of June last. The friend to whom he intended to give the book was then absent. I went to Leyden soon after Mr Dixon left The Hague to satisfy my own curiosity but I did not remain long enough to make the inquiries mentioned in your letter; and Professor van Assen, Mr Dixon's friend, being still absent a copy of part of it was left with Mr. C. Leemans, who engaged to obtain the desired information. He informed me that a building which is now part of the Anatomical Museum was formerly an English church. To this I went, and thought it probable that I was in the Church in which Mr Robinson's congregation worshipped. A considerable time

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elapsed between my visit to Leyden and the receipt of Mr Leeman's letter which I now send you. I wrote to him that I should not forward it till I had the additional information he promised to procure. I have not since heard from him.

Some days since Mr George Sumner of Boston arrived here. He had been at Leyden; but on my speaking of your Chronicles and inquiries he determined to return thither. He took your book and letter and that of Mr Leeman's and was very diligent and active in discovering what could be found concerning the Pilgrims there, and, afterwards, in the Royal Library here; and has made notes of the result of his researches which will be communicated to you. He ascertained that Robinson was buried in St. Peter's—a Dutch church. There is no monument or inscription; the grave cannot be identified. Mr Sumner thinks that if Robinson's congregation had a church, it does not now exist, and its site cannot be ascertained.

I mentioned some time ago to Professor van Assen's father-in-law who lives here, that I had your book for the Professor but that I wished to read more of it. He said that I need not be in haste about it as the Professor was ill. Mr Sumner thought the book ought to remain in the library of the Legation. It would certainly be proper and is desirable to have a copy here, and I think also in the library of the University in Leyden. If however Professor van Assen should recover, I suppose it will be proper to give the copy I have to him according to Mr Dixon's intention.

I am very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

H. BLEECKER.

The Rev. Alexander Young.

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P. S. Mr Sumner found an account of the charge for Robinson's interment in St. Peter's church. From the note in your book, page 393, it appears that his congregation had the use of the church in which he lies buried. St. Peter's church was built in 1321; it is one of the principal churches of Leyden. . . . It is probable that Mr Robinson's congregation had the use of it in the intervals of the Dutch service. H. B.



LETTERS WRITTEN TO HARMANUS BLEECKER  
WHILE IN EUROPE

FROM JOHN V. L. PRUYN

Albany, February 7, 1839.

Dear Sir,

I presume you are continually apprised of what is going on here through the newspapers which you receive. By them you will see that we have been moving on the subject of the Stockbridge Rail Road. We had one of the largest meetings of our citizens ever held, in relation to this matter in the beginning of the winter and the Corporation were asked to take the whole stock. The subject was discussed before the Common Council and citizens heard. The project is opposed by J. S. Van Rensselaer and his father and B. and J. N. Bleecker and others. The Common Council however resolved to apply to the Legislature for the requisite authority or rather approval to take the stock, the right to take it being claimed under the present charter. This they did by a very decided vote. We are now opposed in the Legislature by the same person who opposed us before the Common Council. What will be the fate of the matter remains to be seen—but several of our leading citizens have determined that the road shall be made somehow. . . .

Several deaths have occurred among us since you left. You have undoubtedly heard before this of the death of J. B. Van Schaick and J. V. N. Yates. The Patroon also is gone. He died a week ago last Saturday suddenly. His funeral took place last Thursday from the North Dutch Church attended by the Legislature, all the public bodies, Societies and an innumer-

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able concourse of people. The funeral was in the plainest style, which he had requested.—no military parade or pomp.

. . . As local events interest you much while from home I may also mention a most unexampled flood which we have had in our River. It rose higher than in 1818 and indeed higher than ever before known—and all as it were in a moment, caused by a heavy rain which all reached the streams as there was no snow on the earth to absorb the water. The damage is immense. The flood was a week since last Sunday.

Our country continues prosperous and happy and no doubt presents a better picture of human nature and social happiness and comfort than anything you can see abroad. I have no question you will return home a better republican than ever. . . .

Yours truly,

JOHN V. L. PRUYN.

FROM S. DE WITT BLOODGOOD

My dear Sir,

Albany March 30, 1839.

Your kind letter from the Hague was received this morning and I hasten to answer it. . . . Our local news may be interesting to you. I will therefore, tho' contrary to my habits & taste, gossip a little for your amusement. . . . Your friend James Kane has received the appt. of Indian Agent, which will make him quite easy in his circumstances. Mr. Barent Bleecker has been quite unwell but is recovered. Several deaths have occurred of children in families where you visited. Mr. Beekman our neighbor sails for England the first of May. Jno. Kane postpones his voyage till the fall. The Theatre has been bought by the Congregation of St. Paul's and will be ready in the fall for us, as our

new Church. The Stockbridge Rail Road is still in doubt from the strong opposition to it among our own citizens. The Lush family are about moving from their old family mansion to Clinton Square, and they are about to convert their residence into stores. Gov. Marcy remains in town, having moved into Croswell's house. Gov. Seward remains in the Kane house.

In local politics nothing very new, but a grand debate in the Legislature whether our local improvements shall go on or be stopped. Col. Young and the Locos are for stopping them, and so are some Whigs, as it is found that the actual cost of the enlargement of the Erie Canal will be many millions more than the Canal Commissioners estimated. So of the Genesee Valley Canal. The friends of the Erie R. R. are also presenting their claims for aid. You may safely say that these improvements will go on, but that greater economy and deliberation will prevail in the expenditure. The Legislature of Mass. has made a further loan of credit to the Western R. R. of \$1,200,000. In general politics, we have been much alarmed at the prospect of a rupture with Great Britain in consequence of the Maine difficulties. Since the election of Gov. Fairfield, our armed force of several hundred men were sent into the disputed lands to protect the timber and build a boom across the Aristook to catch it on its way down. This led to a pretty warm proclamation from the Gov. of New Brunswick and the reported movement of troops. Immediately 10,000 men were called out by the Gov. of Maine; the Legislature being in session, 3,000 were immediately marched within a short distance of the frontier in dispute. The most violent threats were used by our people, and every day we expected to hear of bloodshed. Congress being also in session, very warm

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words ensued there, and both parties appeared to be anxious to make political capital out of the affair. (By-the-by this is the canon of our country that no measure can be discussed on its own merits). The President however issued a very judicious and temperate proclamation. Mr. Forsyth and Mr. Fox behaved like men of sense. Gov. Scott, an old friend of Sir John Harvey, was sent on, negotiations took place, and we have the good news this morning that a definite arrangement has been made by which the difference is referred to the two governments, and the American troops are withdrawn. Added to this was the intelligence that the Tories in England were endeavoring to get up a War with us on the score of our Canada difficulties, and a complete war panic had come over us. Money became scarce, stocks fell, real estate tumbled, Wall St. was in an uproar, and everything looked dark & gloomy. We now wait to hear what effect our warlike proceedings will have had on American securities in England. So we go. We have had no real quiet or tranquility in this Country for many years. Party politics control everything, & for an ascendance in power, the real good of the nation is constantly lost sight of. We have news that France and Mexico have made peace on favorable terms to the former. This will open our trade again.

Our Spring is opening. The river became navigable the 25th inst. A previous freshet had however not only done immense injury all along the river, but had lodged immense piles of ice at Castleton which for a long time prevented the boats from getting up.

I suppose you will occasionally inquire about the name and families of those of your Albany friends who came from Holland. Will you, should yr. curiosity

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lead you to the Archives of N. Y. when a Dutch Colony, think of Bloetgoet. My great great grandfather was a representative of the "Dutch Nation" on Long Island at the surrender of the Province by Colve. He was styled in a writ issued to him "Chief of the Dutch Nation" and called upon to defend Utrecht, Flatbush, Flushing, &c. Perhaps you may be able to throw some light on the name. I am curious about it, yet do not wish you to take any trouble that you do not take on account of similar searches.

I should be also much pleased if you would purchase for me, if perfectly convenient before you return, four or five of the gold coins of Holland of old dates that bear any likeness of her illustrious men. I do not care about their costing much—\$50. for the whole four or five, would do, and I will pay the money to your agent here at any time you direct before you return, on hearing from you.

I also spoke to you about some book giving an account of the present literature of Holland. If in English or French I should like it much. . . . Pray remember me to Huygens, and if possible let me hear favorably of him as I have adhered to him thro' all his trouble, & I wish to think well of him & to speak well of him.

Very truly your sincere friend as ever,

S. DE WITT BLOODGOOD.

Simeon DeWitt Bloodgood was a grandson of Captain Abraham Bloodgood of the sloop Olivebranch which, before the war of 1776, carried flour, herring, horses and a variety of products to the West Indies, and brought back in exchange, cotton, cash and rum.

He was the son of Francis A. Bloodgood; graduated at Union College; studied law; was private secretary to DeWitt Clinton and spent much time in literary pursuits, being editor at different periods of two Albany newspapers.



LETTERS

FROM THEODORE SEDGWICK  
WITH A POSTSCRIPT FROM MRS. SEDGWICK

Stockbridge 27th July 1839.

Dear Bleeker,

I recd. a brief note from you dated Hague 7 March last, which is the latest date. You say there, that except a letter of business, and a note from Theodore, you have not heard from America. I had then written you three times. Our last letters from our friends in London are on the 2nd & 4th July, in which they speak of having seen you. They mention that you were then informed of your appointment. It has been upon all occasions spoken of here as very judicious and worthy on the part of the President, and is of course contrasted with many others of the like kind. It is not considered in the usual course as a party appointment. Your friends here believe of course, that it will detain you in Europe for some years. If so, as I suppose it will, we shall have cause to regret it. But we ought not, for I have no doubt that your time will be employed so as to be honourable to yourself, and useful to the country. Yours & my situation are different. You have not the same ties here that I have, & you ought not to consider yourself as bound to Home, as I ought. I hardly know what consideration would induce me to spend two years of the very brief time that may be allowed me, out of the U. States. As to public affairs here, you know, I think, from the papers all that can tell you. Van Buren & his great rival Clay are at present gathering laurels, among partisans in their travels through the country. I see however that a better taste is prevailing, & that they make fewer Speeches & drink less Champagne than Webster did in his western Tour. Judging from the



talk of the papers, and of partisans, you would think the Whigs as confident as ever, which I do not believe to be the case. At the same time I know of no limit to popular delusion. You have probably seen that I was nominated again as Lieut. Gov. I immediately declined, & wrote to Boston to that effect. But my letter was pocketed by some President of a Convention, & remained so. Having been again nominated by another Convention in our part of the state, I was obliged to decline again, & now I suppose they will understand me. I prefer to remain quite clear of office at present certainly, though I have no thought of it, or wish for it at any time. In my quiet way, I think I can do some good as long as I am totally removed from the suspicion of "Spoils" seeking. Somebody however must take office, & it is indeed honourable to the country when men as free from taint as you are, can be appointed. I may perhaps go into the Legislature this winter, if so, it will be for the purpose of endeavoring to get rid of our license law, which is doing more mischief in the State by engendering hostility between different classes of people, than could well have been supposed.

We are leading a very quiet life this summer. The Bridgens have just left us. The Appletons are here living a Cottage life. They are very happy in it, and I believe purely because it is simple, virtuous, & free from excitement. I look upon the condition of a rich town young Lady in these States as deplorable. I cannot conceive what can keep her alive. Indeed Riches for young people here are a very great impediment. I hardly know of anything so bad. There is hardly one in twenty of the opulent who are on a par with other people. And then as to being in a world with other

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people, that seems to be a pleasure nearly denied them. These are among the most excellent persons I know, but their deficiencies arising from a defective education are lamentable. They seem to know nothing hardly of what it is indispensable for any human being to know much. What then must be the fate of the poor Kings & Queens of the earth? Robert's Daughter, writes to her mother telling of having seen the Queen in Hyde Park, & after saying that she looked downcast & melancholy, concludes by exclaiming—"Poor thing how I pity her!"

I do not think the accounts of my Brother are favorable. Tell me when you write what you thought of him.

I was at Albany about three weeks since. All goes on very well there. The City is very prosperous. I saw several of your friends. I read a letter of Mr. Pruyn's from you, I think of the 4th March. He showed me the paper containing a mention of your reception in Holland. This certainly gives you great advantages, & you must use them in some way *pro bono publico*—and I am sure you will.

When you write, let me know anything that is worthy of my attention, and point out to me any Books or other sources of knowledge that come in your way, that I can make any use of. I am now more interested in endeavoring to create some proper impressions as to an Independent press than anything else. I do not, of course, mean a press free from party discussion, but free from the puerilities and party extravagance that are disgracing us in the eyes of the entire world.

Mrs. Sedgwick and all our friends are well. We are expecting Mr. and Mrs. Westerlo here in a few days. Theodore has improved very greatly since you left the U. States. Saving a little tenderness in his foot, he

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seem perfectly well. He is now with us. All desire a kind remembrance to you.

Your friend affectionately,

H. Bleeker

THEODORE SEDGWICK.

My dear friend—It is against my principles to let blank paper go 3000 miles, therefore tho' you have never noticed a letter I wrote you last Febr. (I think) I must avail myself of this space to tell you how truly I rejoice in any honor or pleasure that is conferred upon you. Was it not a satisfaction to see so many Sedgwicks in London? How little you and Maria expected when you last talked *here*, to meet next in England! It seems a great while since we have heard directly from you. Pray let us know what you are doing & enjoying—tell us something of society in Holland, of which we know so little;—of their women and their education—what they read—how they talk & all about them & how our State of manners and degree of civilization compare with what you find there. The best thing that you can write us is that you are happy, & faithful to the friends you have left—among whom never fail to include

Yours truly,

S. S.

From Ach. Martini Chargé D'Affaires of the Netherlands to the United States:

To Mr. Harmanus Bleeker  
at the Hague

Georgetown by Washington, 10th February, 1840.

My dear Sir,

I am truly ashamed of myself when I look at the date of your kind letter from the Hague in October last,

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which came to hand in the month of November and has remained till now without reply. The cause of this postponing however has been greatly occasioned by my supposition that I would be able to give you some more interesting news after Congress should have assembled; but when it had, the first weeks of the session were lost in protracted debates, which could scarcely interest those who were on the spot and which only for their result, when one of the contending parties should get by it a sufficient majority to secure the organization of the house in its interests, could be kept alive amongst the champions of this political arena. Since that time the extraordinary gaiety of Washington at this time of the year, united with the fear of writing in a language, I have no practice in, consummated my apparent negligence. Also after due consideration I think that you will be kept better *au courant* of your politics hereby your American friends and the newspapers as after all by me. I hope therefore you will forgive me, the more so as I am myself the most punished for it, because it has debarred me of any further news from you during the Winter from the Vaderland; and which, in consequence of your kind feelings towards that country, can never be but very gratifying to a true Dutchman as I consider myself to be.

I was very much gratified to hear that your reception and position in Holland was so much to your satisfaction. Your kindly attributing this to my introductions and recommendations is truly too modest in your part. Your character and standing at home were already favorably known in Holland before your arrival there and even if you had been an entire stranger

your presence alone would have secured that position in a very short time.

I hope you will be able to visit next spring or summer that part of the country, which I consider more particularly my fatherland and where you had not yet been, and to remain some days at the country seat of my father. North Brabant has not universally such a rich soil as most of the northern provinces, but is still worth visiting for its manufactures, particularly at Tilburg and Eindhoven, its woody appearance, dryer and healthier air, fine game and some private estates on a larger scale, as in Holland. If you have leisure I recommend to you to go and see the Castles of Helmond and Heeze. The first for its antiquity, Bastille like appearance and plain citizen possessor, Mr. Wesselman, who is a scholar, agriculturist and manufacturer. The last one for its magnificent and extensive park quite in the English grand style and at the same time for its amiable and talented tenants, the family Van Tuyll.

The Cathedral, particularly inside, and some other public buildings at Bois-le-duc are not without fame and if you pass at Breda I recommend to your attention the Sepulchral Monument of Count Engelbert van Nassau, if I remember well Baron of Breda in 1390 or 1410, as one of the greatest and most precious works of statuary and antiquity.

The fortifications of both these cities and others in that province must strike very much an American whose country fortunately does not require many such constructions.

Mr. Alofsen does not stay any more with me, since several months, and resides again at New York where



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he has got a place in some commercial house. I kept him for a long time almost alone out of compassion and with the understanding that he had to look out for another and more profitable situation. If an opportunity presents itself I will transfer to him your compliments and message.

Mr. Davezac has been here twice for a short time but he intends returning and to stay longer. I met him several times and was much gratified to hear him express, at every occasion, his good feelings towards my country and countrymen. He intends to enter an electioneering campaign for the President's reelection and will most probably be selected by his political friends in his native State Louisiana to represent them at a National Convention of the Democratic party for that purpose, to be held at Baltimore some time during this spring or beginning of the summer; and, of course, expects afterwards some new commission abroad.

I am very grateful for your kind remembrance in your letter to the St. Nicholas Society at Albany at the last yearly festival.

John van Buren is expected here at the end of this month. It is very likely he will just arrive in time to witness the arrival of the first grandchild of his father,—the amiable Mrs. Major van Buren being in the expectation of becoming soon a mother. The President enjoys his customary good health and good temper. I met him lately several times galloping on old Roanoke in the Pennsylvania Avenue quite alone or with his nephew Goes, a boy something like Smith was three or four years ago. Smith, by the by, has given himself entirely up at New York to law business. The



Major of course attends his spouse on her morning drives and walks; and Martin Junior is too great a flirt to accompany his father very often at the hours that the young Ladies show themselves on the pavement.

Mrs. Barnard seems to me a very kind amiable little woman and Mr. Barnard is a very gentlemanlike and good man. I am very sorry he is a political opponent of Mr. v. B. I miss however old de Graef and Cumbreling with his little Mrs. Cumbreling very much. Gouverneur Kemble is always the same active man in the House. . . . He is very anxious to learn something about the family of Mr. Gouverneur from Breda, who was elected lately a member of the States General at the Hague for North Brabant, to have a description of his coat of arms and to know if he is of the same family, as is very likely, of the Gouverneurs at New York. I think you would agreeably surprise him by procuring him something about this affair either directly or through me.

I esteem and like rather well my relation and former play fellow, Dirk Doncker Curtius, but I am sorry for his exaggerated and in my opinion entirely mistaken views about our Constitution. I am also pretty well certain that if his worthy father, in his time one of our best Jurists, was yet alive, he would not express the imprudent and dangerous arguments of his son, and I believe that he himself is rather pushed in this business by bad advisers and by a good deal of *amour propre*, which was lesser or more his fault when a young, however always and early a very meritorious, student. I hope that no time will come that he may have cause to regret his actual acts as his and my father had to lament the errors of their youth and times when

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the disunion of our fatherland brought us under the knee of our always dangerous and ever ambitious Neighbor France. Our constitution is as every thing else on this world a work of the hands of weak human beings; however if it were such a very indifferent one the country and the people could not have stood the trial of the last years so well as they did. I therefore wish and hope ardently that the principles of that Constitution may be retained and only such alterations made as the times and the separation from Belguim shall require in the eyes of more sedate and abler statesmen or politicians than my friend D. C. I have seen enough of his arguments on the subject in the Newspapers to accept your offer through Major V. Buren of sending me his pamphlets and I hope and trust that you will not run away with him as Davezac does. Your more reflecting and quiet mind, even with your Republican feelings and education, will guard you against such friends and advisers about our institutions and political wants.

I have made your compliments to the Kanes who have all wished to be remembered to you, particularly the old gentleman, who is always hearty and contented. Pray make my compliments to Mr. le Clercq and to Mrs. Mazel and T. Gravenweerd; excuse my bad English and believe me truly your friend.

ACH. MARTINI.

FROM MISS ANNA BRIDGEN

My dear Sir

Some philosopher says "Let us consider that every time we breathe, a torrent of Lethe penetrates all our existence so that we recall enjoyments but feebly and

sufferings and cares scarce at all." I have been procrastinating the hour of answering your letter in the hope that such influences would soften the deep sorrow we both must feel at the melancholy events which have happened since your departure—but in vain Kitty awakened me last night from a dream of anguish in which I had revived to myself the death of our dear friend Mr. Sedgwick as if it had happened yesterday. My dear Sir no matter how much diversity of taste—temperament—habits of life &c. may have separated us—we have one bond of sympathy at least—we have loved the same friends—and my heart aches for you when I think of your return after so many sad changes.

I would not forego for anything—the recollection of a visit I made last summer at Stockbridge its happiness was so pure so unalloyed. Mr. Sedgwick seemed perfecting every hour in some moral grace—he lived so wisely—he talked much of you—and contrasting you with others—dwelt with such honest pleasure on your mutual business connection in which he said all your accounts were kept in one book your money in one drawer—and in separating, your pecuniary affairs were wound up in an hour. Theodore drank tea with us last night, he has just returned from Stockbridge. I recently heard of Mrs. Van Rensselaer in Philadelphia—her health is amazingly renovated by the change—her beauty is more dazzling—even than in the days of her youth because its expression is deepened. Cornelia is still very delicate and they talk much of going to Europe the ensuing season with Westerlo for an escort. I can just imagine with what pleasure you would receive them in Holland and how happy they would be to find you there. I have cheerful letters from Albany.

## LETTERS

Your friends Maria Brinckerhoff & Catherine Bleecker are in their usual routine of virtuous duties. Mr. Kane complains that his prosperity in his office has not added to his happiness. He dines heartily, gets head-aches, rheumatism, indigestion & low spirits—in short, I suppose he has lost that sustaining pride of Martyrdom so graciously but some of us in such positions. . . . Accept our friendly regards.

ANNA BRIDGEN.

Feb. 23, 1840.

New York.

The Bridgens were of English origin. Two maiden sisters, friendly and original in character, were the last of the family. They lived, for many years, in Albany, but when the Sedgwick, whom they greatly admired, moved to New York, they followed, and spent there the remainder of their lives. Mr. Bleecker always continued to be their business adviser as well as their friend. In the Rural Cemetery at Albany stands a long, low, granite monument and cut on it, in large letters, are the words: "Grave of the Bridgens."

FROM EVERT DUYNCKINCK

56 Bleecker St. March 15, 1840.

Dear Sir,

I would write to you were it only on my return to thank you for the advantages of your society abroad and wish that you may meet with good *genial* employment during your residence in Holland. I know nothing delights you more than a certain kind of mental activity, the delight of discovering in the present the seeds of good for the future and of inventing new thoughts of improvement in the world. I have been led to think of you, this afternoon, by reading Channing's new lectures "on the Elevation of the laboring portion of the community" they were delivered at

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HARMANUS BLEECKER

Boston before the Mechanic Apprentices' Library Association in January last. Fearing that you may not see them for awhile I send you the chief topics of the argument. They are designed to fill up the outline of the "Self-Culture" This elevation he says is not yet above labor for labor has great dignity, difficulties are more important than assistance to the mind, the capacity of steady labor so largely imposed upon the world must be one of the preparations for another state of being but man has intellect, heart, imagination, taste as well as bones and sinews and the *whole man* should be called into action. Society has much to amend to bring this about; the present civilization confines the activity of the individual to a narrow range perhaps the heading of pins or pointing of nails. Still labor is part of our present life and not to be shamed by speculation and gambling.

Nor is it an Elevation into the upper classes. Fashion is a poor vocation. The creed that idleness is a privilege, and work a disgrace, is among the deadliest errors. Without depth of thought or earnestness of feeling, or strength of purpose, living an unreal life, sacrificing substance to show, substituting the factitious for the natural, mistaking a crowd for society *finding its chief pleasure in ridicule*, and exhausting its ingenuity in expedients for killing time, fashion is the last employment for a human being.

Nor is it to become self important politicians. No class as such should bear rule among us. Lectures, the growing self-respect of the people and the discovery that the influence of government is overated will abate the present political phrenzy.

But it is to attain elevation of Soul—in force of



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thought, in force of pure and generous feeling, in force of moral purpose. As the basis every known error of life must be abandoned. Force of thought is to be exerted on matter and mind. Mechanics should be taught drawing to give their works beauty—the study of mind is the study of great ideas of Freedom, Beauty, Valor, Spiritual Energy, of Virtue, &c, of the importance of the individual.

This is the first head. “In that the Elevation consists”. Now it is objected, 1st That the laborer cannot have many books, but very few books deserve to be read, there is no magic in a printed page. Human life is the library. Every human being a volume.

2nd That a privileged few are intended by God to think for the mass—but no individual has this monopoly of thought any more than of light or air. The mind is more essential to human nature and more enduring than the limbs and was this made to lie dead?

3rd That a *little* learning is dangerous—whose learning is not little? If we knew all the world there would be the planets yet unknown.

4th That religion should be received on authority. No! the precious, the living, the effectual part of a poor man’s faith is that of which he sees the reasonableness and excellence.

5th That the distinction of *Ranks* is essential to social order. Exceedingly insisted on in Europe this has nearly died out here. There should be variety of occupations. We are too monotonous. Men of course will keep company with those with whom they have most sympathy but this is not *rank or caste*. Rank may be useful in a rude age but it provokes instead of restraining in a more advanced stage of society.



Want of the necessary refinement in the lower classes will be obviated by culture. It is not one class only that needs reform: we all need more true courtesy and self respect. But suppose that the distinctions of the past tended to refinement. *The past is gone.* We have to cope with a new state of things and must make the best of them.

6th Population outstrips the means of improvement and leaves the laborer to toil. But this objection comes from the wealthy and *interested* and is to be suspected. It applies to the past not to the new elements of science in the present. *We* have disproved it as a nation; our classes of the poor are rising intellectually and we are growing richer! And the highest social art is in its infancy. We do not know what the people can do when once impregnated with such a conception of progress.

For our encouragement: The respect for labor is increasing. A popular literature is arising, one suited especially to the laborer; better views of education; the clearer development of the principals of Christianity.

Such are the chief topics of these lectures in Channing's own words. I know that you cannot always immediately get a new book from London so I have thought this might be worth something to you. If you have the book itself by your side so much the better.

These lectures and the sermon on the disaster of the Lexington are all that Channing has published since my return.

. . . Mr Emerson is now lecturing here but though he says a great many separate truths in a pointed style, is not sound in all.

Mr Dana, the Poet, has delivered a course of lectures

## LETTERS

involving some of the higher literary principals and has been received with great respect.

Now that we are to have a regular succession of steamers may I hope for an occasional letter from you however brief and any information I can collect here for you I shall be most happy to send you. Mr Beekman is well and will be married at New Brunswick in the course of this week, My respects to any of your friends that may recollect me.

I am

Yours truly

EVERT DUYCKINCK.

Evert A. Duyckinck lived in New York and was a writer of considerable reputation. At his death his private library with quite a sum of money, was given to the Lenox Library.

FROM JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

My Dear Sir, Hall, Cooperstown, April 22d, 1840.

Mrs Temple Palmer of New York (a daughter of the late Sir John Temple) is desirous of possessing letters to our Legation at Brussels, and has written to me to procure one. Now I do not know who the chargé is, but one of my daughters affirms that you have lately been sent there from the Hague. I have defended you from this accusation in vain, resolutely maintaining that you would not go from the pure Doric of Amsterdam to the patois of Brabant but I am obliged to yield. At all events you are somewhere in that quarter of the world, and may give Mrs Palmer a letter to the Brussels chargé, if you are not the man. I can only say that she and her daughter are acquaintances of ours that we made in Europe, and have continued at home, and that you ought to be thankful for an opportunity to know them.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

I see your old friend Theo. Sedgwick is dead, but young Theodore promises to fill his place worthily. Bradish you probably are aware is married, and everybody says is more in love than boys are apt to be at sixteen. I am told he kept his eyes riveted on his young wife during the time consumed in reading the Governor's Message, and that must have been something like a week. Stevenson, who is a little spiteful at any one who gets married, circulates these stories.

Well, can the Hollanders really speak Dutch? Poor Castor (whilom of The Statesman) used to affirm that there was no French at Paris, as he could neither understand nor be understood.

I wish devoutly I could spend an hour or two in some of the galleries that are within your reach, and look once more at the noble churches and quaint old houses of Antwerp. Can you fancy that the people who built the old church at the junction of State & Market Streets, actually reared the towers of Mechlin, Antwerp and the Hotel de Ville of Brussels?

I have just been revolutionizing Christ Church, Cooperstown—not turning out a vestry—but converting its pine interior into oak—*bona fide* oak, and erecting a screen that I trust, though it may have no influence on my soul, will carry my name down to posterity. It is really a pretty thing, pure gothic, and is the wonder of the country round.

I wish you all happiness, my dear Sir, and consider myself fortunate in having this opportunity of reminding you of my existence.

Yours very sincerely

(Signed) J. FENIMORE COOPER.

H. Bleecker Esquire

LETTERS

FROM SIMEON DE WITT BLOODGOOD

Albany, June 29, '40.

My dear Sir:—

I received your kind letter and would be most happy to write you often if it was in my power. But my business, too much extended for my comfort, requires every thought and I candidly tell you there will be no confidence, no prosperity, no hope for this country without a political change. Capitalists are greedily looking out for the halcyon days when they can get laborers to work for ten cents a day, while if you offer to sell their stock on a good mortgage, they require a discount of 20 or 25 per cent. Nothing now is natural. All business is transacted in uncertainty; bills of one State are at a heavy discount in another. We could not let well alone. "We wanted to be better, took medicine and here we are."

The Political world is all in a "foam." Conventions at which 20,000 people are assembled, forming a dense mass over many acres, are now not unfrequent. Never did the opposition muster so strong and I can assure you M. Van Buren will certainly be defeated. Make a memorandum of this. The prediction is sure to be fulfilled. Now having discussed this matter, let us gossip a little.

Albany is now the "Dutch oven" spoken of by Mr. Willis so impolitely. We are literally roasting. Thermometer over 100 in the sun. Since I last wrote you, Mr. Barent Bleecker has died, quite calmly and happily. No will has yet been found, much to the surprise of his immediate friends. It is supposed that at the end of six weeks it will be produced. The Manor

house is still vacant. Stephen Jr. has not taken possession. You no doubt by this time have seen the Manor family who as I understood were to meet you in London. William has built a splendid pile of great size and cost on the hill north of Greenbush. It is said it will cost him \$100,000. It is certainly considered a piece of useless expenditure as he has a splendid house in the city. It is more like an English noble's seat than an American countryhouse.

There are no changes in any other families here, I believe. All are well. Miss Westerlo still complains of her throat but there appears no change. I believe I told you of Mr. Francis Bloodgood's death,

. . . *Matters legal.* The last legislature passed a bill reducing the fee bill to a mere shadow; \$25 for a foreclosure, and from \$7 to \$10 on an ordinary collecting case. They are exercising all their ingenuity to evade the law. The Court of Errors are to sit at Saratoga Springs in August. *Where*, is yet doubtful. A bath house would seem most suitable for the weather, and the warmly contested cases.

Saratoga is just beginning to fill up. Mrs. Gould (Judge Woodworth's daughter) returned there this morning, reports 90 at the U. S. hotel which has been enlarged and made a splendid affair.

A new mineral spring has been found near the Pavilion which *foams* up (literally) through a curb 18 inches square. It is a curiosity and the most delightfully tasting of the whole. It cost \$2000 to bore it. By the way if I were you, I would take a short trip to the chief German Baths. They must be great curiosities, if Dr. Granville's account of them is to be believed. That of Carlsruhe in particular. Some of them men-



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tioned by him are said to have an astonishing influence over the nervous system, bringing it back to youthful quiet.

Our Stockbridge railroad is soon to be commenced. The Bostonians are resurveying for the last time. In 18 months we shall pass from Boston to Albany in 10 to 12 hours. The New Yorkers are alarmed and have commenced exerting themselves to make their road. Think of a country whose business requires a Hudson River, and a railroad alongside of it!! Albany will be at the head of two markets, will command both, and must become a depot for the great West. On the other hand New York and Boston commission houses will be here contending for the produce of our Canal. Property must rise and our population approximate to that of Boston.

We hear often from Romeyn [Brodhead] who appears to be improving himself by observation and study. His residence with you abroad, will be the means of expanding his mind, and giving his manner tone. It will also be in his power, should you hereafter wish it, to give an interesting account of your residence, (official) at the Hague. Can't you get some Dutch captain to sail one of his shallops up to Albany with a cargo for this city? We have 9 feet water at the bar. We would buy his cargo of cheese, gin, snuff, bolting cloth, bulbs, linen, brown and white. We would make it common cause and give him a profit. And yet after all it would not do for you or any individual to advise such a trip. Still I think it would pay.

We ought to have a better trade with Holland than we have. We are importing cattle from England at enormous prices, while the Dutch are equally good and



HARMANUS BLEECKER

would sell well here. So their ponies, for I understand there are some choice breeds in Friesland.

. . . With many wishes for your health and happiness, I remain

Ever yours truly,  
S. D. W. B.

Mr. (Charles B.) Lansing bears this letter and the parcels.

FROM EVERT A. DUYCKINCK

Dear Sir,

I am much indebted for the two letters I have received dated the Hague—and the good wishes to my wife have been as well received. It was not the first time she had heard of Mr. Bleecker for I often mention your name at table in any reminiscences of the Hague. The encouragement you give me to write something that shall in some way benefit our country is often of timely service to me in my reading. There is one field in which (I confess I have not tested my fitness for it) there is sufficient motive, that of lecturing:—the lecturers indeed are forming in this country a kind of unlicensed priesthood who will derive their sanction from the Truth they can inspire people with. We have an excellent model of the practical lecturer in Mr. Dewey who fills up the details where Channing lays down the principles. The lectures are well attended and probably will be very vigorously pursued the next winter. I shall endeavor then to give you some account of them as one of the most important theories of the day.

## LETTERS

I am looking for the return of Miss Sedgwick for some light on the real state of Europe. We want a good account of the domestic habits. What do we really know of the true state of society in Paris? Are not the manners of the best classes overlooked?

I met Mrs. Young the other day, the wife of the senator who spoke warmly of you. Mr. Davezac was very busy here during the last City Election when I saw him often: he talks as well as ever and talked sometimes of you with interest. Mr. Beekman is at an inconvenient distance out of the city so that it requires half a day to see him and return: we have been aiming at each other for the last month without meeting.

I am established in a home of my own, No. 465 Houston St., where one of these days I hope to see you, as we used to dine together at the Poissonnerie Anglaise.

Guizet's Essay on Washington, lately published adopts the facts and opinions of Bancroft, Spark's Life and other authorities you are familiar with, but it will be bran new I dare say to most of the educated classes in Europe. What says Mr. Schalf?

I shall not forget the request for the devises of the different states, though I do not remember to have seen anything of the kind.

Accept my best wishes in your absence from home and believe me

Yours truly

EVERT A DUYCKINCK

New York July 20, 1840.

P. S. I hope to write to you soon a better filled letter and more at length.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

FROM MISS ANNA BRIDGEN

My dear Sir, Albany September 10th, 1840.

I ought long since to have answered your kind letter enclosing the draft for which I send the annexed receipt but I deferred at first because I expected to visit Albany and wanted to transmit all the intelligence I could gather in regard to your friends in hopes of making my letter more welcome to you and since my arrival here I have found such a tangle of things to do that I have not been able to disengage a minute for that purpose. . . .

Things here remain very much as you left them—except always the clay Hills which they will cut down—leaving the unhappy Lots in the clouds. I am now remaining here trying to compromise any part of an assessment of \$3,300. on a Lot worth \$500. I am in great danger of becoming a Locofoco as this has happened under the administration of a whig corporation. The whole Bleecker family (this branch of it—I had forgotten how great a family you were) have assembled in solemn conclave to determine the merits of Uncle Barent's will—which is decided by the Surrogate (*being a whig*) to be no will. . . .

Mrs. Kent \* spent last week here, in which period she finished her 71 year, and the day after walked over the whole distance to Mr. William Van Rensselaer's—a splendid new house  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile from Bath—ascended to the very roof, investigated the dimensions of *every-one* of the 72 apartments *it is said* to contain and walked back again without more fatigue than the youngest of the party. I ought to say however that she was sup-

\* Chancellor and Mrs. Kent had gone from Albany to live in New York.

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ported by Mr. James Kane's friendly arm—who twitched her out and twitched her home again. Everybody here talks with the most friendly anticipations of the hope of your return. I took tea last evening with your friends Mr. J. & Mrs. C. Ten Eyck—they are more unaltered than what we used to call in Scripture phrase the “Everlasting Hills.” . . .

from your friend

ANNA BRIDGEN

FROM SIMEON DEWITT BLOODGOOD

My dear Sir

Albany, Dec. 10, 1840.

The most important news I can communicate to you is what you have already heard, the complete overthrow of M. V. Buren. You may remember I have from time to time told you of this expected result. The majority is large, clear and unprecedated, and there can be no doubt of the popular will.

Romeyn has been with us much, and he seems to be most grateful to you for your kindness to him. He is evidently much improved, and I regret he was obliged to come here, when his advantages were so great with you. He will probably sail for the British shore, next month, having the certainty of the appointment he mentioned to you, if Gov. Seward's pledges verbal and written are to be relied on. I shall advise him to go to you first, and I hope you will receive him in the same friendly spirit you have already shown him.

Ever yours truly,

S. DEWITT BLOODGOOD

(Harmanus Bleecker Esq.)

HARMANUS BLEECKER

FROM J. ROMEYN BRODHEAD

Albany, 15 December, 1840.

My dear Sir,

. . . We had a very agreeable and pleasant Saint Nicholas dinner at Congress Hall. Mr. Van Vechten did the honors very well, though there were many very warm and friendly wishes expressed in regard to yourself; and not a few anxious inquiries as to the probable time of your return. I was called upon to say something about Holland—which I endeavored to do. I send you herewith a copy of the Gazette containing the proceedings and my remarks. Mr. Pruyn whom I have just seen, says he will send you some more.

. . . Mr. and Mrs. Corning left here some weeks ago, for Liverpool, with the intention of spending a few months abroad. They will probably visit the Hague before their return. Mr. Isaiah Townsend accompanied them.

All your friends that I have seen here are well, except Mr. Dudley. . . . The Becks are very well and make many inquiries about you. Miss Helen expresses many thanks for your attention in sending Dutch papers—and appears to be making some progress in the language. Lewis is now lecturing with very great success at the Medical College, which is becoming a very valuable institution, and is a great credit to the enterprising spirit of the Albanians.

. . . I hope you will allow me to add my very sincere good wishes on the approach of another New Year's Day. The last, I spent with you at The Hague; and now I am only able to send across the waters, those congratulations, I should have been very happy, to have again been able, personally to deliver. I beg you

## LETTERS

also to tell François that I do not forget him or his family in the Casuaire Straat—and that Mr. John Van Buren the other day made some particular inquiries about him.

. . . Mr. Davezac I believe is well. He has been very active in speech making along the River counties and in canvassing for Mr. V. B. I believe he stays at present with Mrs. Livingston at Redhook.

From present appearances I think it probable I shall revisit Europe next year. The Governor says he will nominate me early in January; and if so, I shall sail as soon as I can make my arrangements.

Sincerely and affectionately yours,  
J. ROMEYN BRODHEAD.

FROM MISS MARIA B. SEDGWICK

New York, 27th January, 1841.

My dear Mr. Bleecker,

As you have been so good as to express a desire to hear from me, I venture to substitute myself once more as a correspondent in the place of my Mother, who has not yet resumed her usual habits of writing. It is a long time since we have received any direct communication from yourself, & we regret very much hearing so seldom, but with the many and various demands upon your time, we have perhaps no right to urge our claims very strenuously. In consequence of the political changes here, many of your friends are predicting your resignation,—& although you have now been long enough abroad to have become accustomed to those European peculiarities which are not always agreeable at first; & even perhaps to prefer your present to your former mode of life, I hope you will not be unwilling



to resume old habits again. The society of many friends who will be most happy to welcome you home, ought to be some compensation for the loss of European refinements.

My Mother & I have been in New York since December. She was very unwilling to leave home, but was induced to do so, by the desire of being with Theodore & Sara, & the belief that the mildness of the Winter here would be beneficial to her health which has suffered much during the year. In the illness & death of Aunt Symmes, she had many painful scenes to pass through—for though we had long anticipated this, & during the last few months could not help regarding it as very near, in consequence of Aunt's increasing infirmities & great age, yet it was impossible fully to realize the pain of separation from so dear & long tried a friend, until it actually took place—and to my Mother, who considered her more in the light of a parent than any other relation, it was particularly trying.

After having my enthusiasm excited by the arts in Europe, I have been endeavoring to keep it alive by visiting everything of the like description here—the field is certainly not now a very wide one, but if we do justice to the genius of our country, I see no reason why it should not soon be extended. You have heard of Powers of course—who has been for a long time improving himself in Italy but another light has lately arisen, less known—a poor American by the name of Crawford, who is now struggling against all sorts of difficulties in Rome, & who, if we may believe the testimony of those who are judges in such matters, promises to distinguish himself highly. It is said that Thor-

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waldsen considers him as destined to succeed himself in the antique style, & an article has lately appeared in the American from some English pen, crying shame on New York, if it does not encourage his efforts. His principal work thus far is a very beautiful statue of Orpheus; the size of life. I saw the model of it at his studio & was delighted with the design and execution. Orpheus is just descending to the infernal regions, with his lyre in one hand, & the other raised and shading his eyes as if to protect them from the sudden & painful change from light to darkness. He has already succeeded in charming Cerberus, who already sleeps at his feet. The grace of the attitude would strike the most unlearned; I was very glad to have my impressions confirmed from a source that is not likely to be prejudiced in favour of American talent. When I was in Rome, Crawford was ill, & exceedingly poor. He would not have been able to put his Orpheus into marble if some American gentlemen had not been generous enough to supply him the means—but it is still on his hands. There is a proposal to subscribe a sum for it here, sufficient to remunerate him; & I should think some of the New York merchants would do well to make this use of their superfluous means. While they can afford as they are doing now, to spend twenty dollars on assembly tickets, it would certainly be disgraceful should they refuse to furnish this assistance to their countryman & to appropriate to their own city a beautiful specimen of the arts.

very sincerely yours,

MARIA B. SEDGWICK.

Miss Sedgwick was the daughter of his old friend and law partner, Theodore Sedgwick.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

FROM JOHN V. L. PRUYN

New York, April 10, 1841.

My dear Sir:

. . . The sudden death of General Harrison has produced a great sensation throughout the country. Party spirit has been entirely thrown aside in the demonstrations of respect and feeling which the occasion has called forth. But one voice pervades the land. The whole thing is highly creditable to our country and its institutions. A stranger could not comprehend it, had he witnessed the strife of politics last fall. The great principle of entire submission to the will of the majority explains all to those who understand our institutions. Yesterday a great parade took place at Albany. But I hear it stormed all day—notwithstanding which I am told the procession was so large, that it took one hour to pass any given point on the line. Today a great procession takes place here. It will probably be one of the largest ever seen in the town. Mr. Van Buren has a place assigned him in it.

Yours truly

J. V. L. PRUYN.

FROM MISS MARIA BRINCKERHOFF

April 14th, 1841.

Mr. Brodhead can tell my friend Mr. Bleecker, much better than I can write, all that is passing in our midst, still I cannot resist the temptation to scribble a few lines if it were only to bring myself to your remembrance. I sincerely wish that I could feel satisfied that my epistles were worthy of the time they occupied in perusing and the distance they must travel. . . .

## LETTERS

It is a fortnight this day since we consigned Aunt Bleecker's remains to the silent tomb. She was ill a fortnight and suffered much. Four relatives have been buried in the short space of ten months. . . .

Mrs. Van Schaick has, if the report is true, rented her home to Mr. David Wood who is to marry Margaret Boyd some time this Spring. All the bachelors are looking out for wives, among them Dr. Hun and he and Miss L. Reynolds will soon be one. . . .

Mrs. William Cooper's death has caused a melancholy situation amongst all who knew her, she was a truly amiable, kind woman. Judge Vander Pool is unconsolable, he says it seems so mysterious that he, who has been so long apparently on the threshold of death, should be spared and his daughter in the meantime struck with the same disease, and carried to the grave before him. He is bowed down with grief. Mrs. Cooper made an arrangement this winter and divided her property. John takes the home in State Street. . . . Teunis Van Vechten is again to be Mayor. Dr. Barent has purchased the old house and lot on the corner of Steuben and Pearl and is putting up a brick building and stable. G. Y. Lansing has built on Clinton Square and sold the old Chancellor Corner to Dr. P. McNaughton. Thus you will find some changes on your return. Uncle B. B.'s house in Broadway (I think I wrote you they had changed the name of Market Street since Dr. Wendell had taken down the old Mansion and built up two stores with plate glass windows) is changed to a Confectioner's shop. Sarah and Susan L. have rented their house for a boarding house and they build next to Mr. J. Bogart's in Broadway.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

In one of your first letters you mentioned having forwarded an engraving of P. Potter's celebrated Bull. . . . There is a great rage now for all sorts of antiquities. Mr. Alexander, the artist, has been to every Dutch house in the city to procure furniture and china; this has induced others to do the same and all the old articles that have not seen the light for years are being brushed up to occupy the most conspicuous places. Our old inhabitants are dropping off so fast we must find something to remind us of by-gone days.

Mrs. Visscher is to be buried this afternoon. She had reached her 88th year. Mr. Kane seems to feel much flattered with your notice of him, particularly when his Nephew dined with you. It has put him in spirits again. He seemed to feel sensibly the death of his brother Elias and his neice Lydia. . . .

How will you come back? Contented, not only with America, but old Albany? Young Brodhead seems so happy to have an opportunity to go back that I fear it will not answer for Americans to try the experiment. You will find it dull after all you have enjoyed. We are all in a state of excitement just now with the proposal to build a bridge across the river opposite the city, they had a very full meeting on Saturday and the Inhabitants are most enthusiastic, but, as you may suppose, the Trojans are up in arms also and declare if the Albanians build it they will come down in a body to cut it down. This will not defer the proceedings however. . . .

Although late, I cannot close without wishing you a Happy New Year. You were often spoken of on the first day by many of our friends who called. Mr. Kane



## LETTERS

calls sometimes. He changeth not. If all other things alter you will find him the same. Mother and sister both say "Remember us kindly to our good friend Mr. Bleecker." Whatever changes you may meet with you will find none in the sincere friendship of

MARIA BRINCKERHOFF.

We have had gaiety also and the change in politics has caused our city to be filled with strangers. Our citizens, whatever may be said to the contrary, are and have been very hospitable. Mrs. J. C. Spencer has given soirées which were said to be very agreeable. I attended one and found it so, also a Ball at Mrs. J. Taylor's. Mr. Stevenson gave us an extremely pleasant dinner. The compliment was for Miss Warren of Troy. We also had a tea-party at the Westerlos' for Miss W. This has been the extent of my dissipation. There have been dinners, parties and suppers innumerable. The latter have become quite fashionable among the ladies. Mrs. Corning has introduced them to shew all the pretty things brought out by Mr. Sherman who is the beau among the ladies this winter.

Miss Brinckerhoff was the daughter of Peter Brinckerhoff and married Harmon Pumpelly.

FROM R. WESTERLO

Albany May 23d 1841.

My dear Sir,

You will find great changes here since you left us—many very many of your old friends and acquaintances are no more and several are removed from the City. Indeed I assure you our society is very much changed.

Our Citizens have all winter been much interested in the question of a Bridge across the Hudson—it has been



HARMANUS BLEECKER

delayed so long, that our Legislature which will soon adjourn have postponed any decision on it—Next winter when the rail road to Boston will be nearly completed I doubt not it will pass—Albany is slowly but substantially improving—We have had the coldest spring I ever remember, till yesterday Fire was as necessary as in winter—We yesterday heard from Mrs. V. R. at Rome. I suppose you will soon see her in Holland—I think they are all anxious to return. Don't you sometimes wish for old Albany?

My Family all unite in their best respects to you and believe me ever your sincere friend

R. WESTERLO.

Rensselaer Westerlo was the half brother of the Patroon Stephen Van Rensselaer and son of Domine Eilardus Westerlo, who succeeded the famous Domine Frelinghuysen as pastor of the First Reformed Church.

FROM MISS ANNA BRIDGEN

New York 16th June, 1841

My dear Sir

On my return to town yesterday after a short visit to Chancellor Kent's country seat I found your friendly letter enclosing the final settlement of the Amsterdam house which my sister and I are deeply obliged to you for bringing so far to a close. . . .

I went yesterday to see a very affecting picture of our friend Mrs. Susan Sedgwick taken by Ingham for Maria. . . . Catherine's (Sedgwick) book is momentarily expected. Theodore is going to try the Virginia springs. I dare say I should have much to tell you that would interest you in the humble annals of Albany. Mrs. Dudley has a most unweildy fortune to take care of indeed all the world seems to be full of chaos. I am

## LETTERS

afraid if you were to return just at this period you would find you needed all the help of philosophy to bear stoically the sad changes. Your own particular little circle remain just the same excepting that the Ladies have taken their womens privilege of growing *better*. I insist upon it that women improve the advantages of *time* in that particular more than men. I dont know a friend that I loved at 16 that I dont love ten times more at 50. John Van Buren is going to be married to Miss Van der Pool. Poor President Duer has been dangerously ill for two or three months. Mr. John Duer has returned to his profession. As for poor federalism or whigism—or log cabins or what you like they are in very low repute even with their own upholders—for my part I wish I had been born after the world was finished. I am tired of experiments.

ANNA BRIDGEN

FROM JOHN V. L. PRUYN

Albany July 30, 1841.

My dear Sir

I received today yours of the 9th inst in reply to mine of the 17th June. Ten years ago we would hardly have supposed that in so short a time we could communicate so speedily with the old world. It is but a little over a month since mine of the 17th was written *here*. Behold I have an answer from more than 3,000 miles distant—what may we not expect from the future? The death of Mr. King was very sudden & affected our community very much. By his will Mrs. King is his sole executrix. He has given her his property. Mr. W. W. Frothingham with whom Mr. K. formed a business con-

HARMANUS BLEECKER

nection last fall before he left for the West Indies is Mrs. K.'s agent in closing up the affairs of the estate. Nothing of special interest is going on in town—our city is prosperous & a great many buildings will be erected this year. Mr. Blunt is to build on the old Stevenson property—where the house stands. The Douw corner has been taken down & a fine building put up in its place. The Rail Road is coming up at the south end of the City over the eastern plane, a matter of doubtful expediency. The south market at the old watering place is to be taken down & a new Steamboat landing made at that place. The location of the termination of the Eastern road is not yet determined upon. Most probably it will be at Maiden Lane.

. . . . .  
In haste.

Yours truly

JOHN V. L. PRUYN

FROM J. ROMEYN BRODHEAD

Amsterdam, 30 August 1841

My dear Sir;

I very greatly regret that Mrs. Van Rensselaer's party leave here so soon. The weather is now just beginning to be pleasant, and I had hoped that they would have stayed some time longer in their ancestral city. But as they are now on their way to Paris, I suppose they wish to make as much progress as possible before the Equinox. I regret their departure very much.

I deeply regret that my first essay here has been so unfortunate. Upon calling on Mr. Demunnick who

## LETTERS

has charge of the West India Company papers, I found to my deep sorrow that all the old documents of that Company previously to 1700 had been sold for some 3 or 4000 gulden, to paper mills in 1818 under an order from The Hague. I cannot tell you how much I have been dispirited by this intelligence. It is indeed a terrible blow to my prospects. I have already however, seen the Secretary of Classis and engaged him in my behalf. He will give me every facility, and doubtless the Resolutions of the Vroedschap will give us something. I do not therefore, utterly despair, though I am sadly disappointed I must confess.

Mr. V. R. goes early tomorrow and kindly offers to take this. The Dixons and Homers are here. The Kirklands went this morning.

In haste, yours affectionately and truly,  
J. ROMEYN BRODHEAD.

FROM J. ROMEYN BRODHEAD

Amsterdam, 9 Sept. 1841.

My dear Sir,

The Classis have decided *to loan* the original papers received from America, to General Synod, for *four years*, and have also given me permission to take copies of such other papers as I may think proper. This is better than nothing.

I have seen the Burgomaster, & have also got the permission to transcribe all papers in their archives relating to N. N.—I am very much obliged to you, for attending so promptly to the request contained in my last letter. I hope I shall be through all my work here in about 2 or 3 weeks, and will then return to the Hague—where I expect to be at least a month.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

Will you be good enough to send the enclosed letters to London by your next mail?

Believe me, in haste, very truly yours,

J. ROMEYN BRODHEAD.

H. Bleecker, Esq.

The Dixons leave here next Sunday.

N. B. Have any of the books I ordered from the Middelburg sale yet arrived? I should like to know which they are, if any have come, as I may perhaps be able to get others here, if I have not got them at M.

FROM BENJAMIN F. BUTLER

New York. November 20th 1841.

My dear Sir:

. . . I was deeply touched by the kind manner in which you alluded to the fiery ordeal through which I was obliged to pass, during the Presidential election of last year. The consciousness of acting, throughout, under the influence of what I believed to be my duty as a good citizen, and the supports which I received in many instances, from moderate men of the opposite party, enabled me to bear, with reasonable equanimity, the assaults made on my character. If life is spared to me, I hope to convince many of those who took part in those assaults that they did me injustice: and in the meantime, I feel that I can truly say, and I desire to be grateful to God for it, that I have freely forgiven, as I hope myself to be forgiven for my own trespasses, the wrongs they inflicted on me.

When I received your letter, I had it in contemplation to prepare at my first leisure, a response pursuant to a



## LETTERS

public pledge given to that effect, to certain charges made against me as Att<sup>y</sup> General. During a sojourn in the country, in August & September last, I executed this purpose and have just given my vindication to the Press, in the form of two letters addressed by me to you. This address will not connect you with my controversy, nor make you responsible in any way, for any matter contained in the letters. I inscribed my vindication to you, because I regarded you as a friend to whom I stood in such relations as to warrant it, & because I knew from your letter, that you would take *special* interest in a refutation of the calumnies in question. I shall send you the letters as soon as I can do so, and I trust you will find them in language, style & spirit, such as become the subject & the person to whom they are addressed.

What an extraordinary chapter in our history would that be, which should record the events of the last eighteen months, just as they occurred! The most unprecedented efforts made & means resorted to, to gain the power of the Country; the most triumphant success and the most sudden & signal discomfiture of cherished schemes ever known in the history of popular governments. Having a good deal of *your optimism* in political matters, and believing that He who governs the world, not only does what is right & best, in reference to the interests of his whole empire, but that He has special kindness in store for our Country, I felt no repinings at the result. Indeed, I thought it very possible that it might be necessary that our people should drink again & possibly still more deeply of the cup of suffering which inevitably follows a paper money debauch: and at all events, I felt assured, that in time, the sober mind and people of the United States would



HARMANUS BLEECKER

do justice to those who had labored to establish credit on a sound & permanent basis, and to preserve the liberties & morals of the nation from the baneful influence of a controlling money power. None of us, however, anticipated so speedy and universal a revolution. It surprises us who are on the spot, as much as it can you.

The time has not yet come for the publication you suggest; for as you will perceive from our newspapers, there is a general desire on the part of the friends of the late administration, that Mr Van Buren should be a candidate for re-election. He and his personal friends will do nothing to secure such a nomination; but should he live till 1843, I think it almost certain that he will be spontaneously called for as the candidate. Calculations of this sort belong to our condition; but in such striking events as the death of Mr Sedgwick [in respect to whose merits, I entertain the like sentiments with yourself], Gen. Harrison, Mr Forsyth and others, we may learn not to make them the basis of sanguine expectation.

I am happy to tell you that Mr. Van Buren is well, and agreeably situated at Kinderhook. His happy temperament enables him really to enjoy the *otium* of retirement with true dignity.

My own household are well. I am quietly at work in my profession, relieved or interrupted [the last is probably the true word] by the preparation of addresses, lectures etc. which leave me little time for correspondence—so little that I shall not deserve another letter, I fear, from you.

Mrs. Butler & my daughters unite in friendly remem-

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brances, and with them pray accept the assurance of the grateful sentiments with which I subscribe myself,

Your friend

Harmanus Bleecker, Esquire

B. F. BUTLER.

etc. etc.

at the Hague

FROM EDWARD JAMES.

My dear Sir,

Paris, Dec. 9, 1841.

My brother Augustus received your letter a few days since but as he was exceedingly occupied in making the necessary arrangements to leave for the United States, he desired me to write to you and give his best regards and say that he will write to you from Albany as soon as he arrives there.

I received several letters this morning from Albany and New York—there is nothing particularly interesting going on at home. Albany is very healthy and prosperous. My sister Mrs Barker wrote me from Albany that she had dined at Mrs B. Tibbits the day before in company with Mr and Mrs Pumpelly (Miss Brinckerhoff). Mr P— is to reside in Albany. Miss Cornelia Westerlo has gone to New York to pass another winter with Mrs Clinton. The Prince de Joinville and Lord Morpeth (late Irish Secretary) are being fêted in New York. My sister Ellen writes me that she has met Lord Morpeth at several dinners in New York and is much pleased with him &c &c.

I hoped and expected to see you in Paris this winter, but your letter to my brother I was sorry to perceive was rather discouraging to such hopes. Alexander Van Rensselaer left this for the East about 3 weeks since—he succeeded in finding a companion— a Mr Fraser, from Philadelphia—they expect to be absent

HARMANUS BLEECKER

till about the 1st of March. Mrs Van Rensselaer and the young ladies are here and living very quietly of course. Mr Everett has returned to Paris for his family and will set out very soon for London. I received a letter from Mr Brodhead dated the Hague. I found to my astonishment that he would pass the winter in London—though he did not appear to desire it, but it seemed to be from instructions received from the Governor. I shall write to him very shortly.

Had I not made all my arrangements to spend the winter in Paris I think I should try and persuade Westerlo Van Rensselaer to go with me to the Hague to spend a while, but as I am quite anxious to learn French, now that I am here, I believe that I shall remain.

. . . Isaiah Townsend is here and waiting for a younger brother to come out to accompany him to the East. Mrs James, Miss Bay, Mrs Van Rensselaer and Mrs Ledyard desire me to give their best regards to you and hoping to have the pleasure of hearing from you soon,

I remain respectfully and truly yours,

E. JAMES.

Edward James was a member of a large and well-known Albany family. His two brilliant nephews, sons of his brother Henry, were Professor William James of Harvard, and Henry James, the writer.

FROM J. J. LANSING

(A cousin of Mr. Bleeker)

Albany 24th Dec. 1841.

Dear Sir:

The changes and improvements in our city upon your return will strike you as it has others who have

## LETTERS

been absent for any length of time as affording the strongest evidence that our march is still onward one fact will enable you to judge for yourself I am told not less than two hundred brick houses have been erected the last year & a great proportion of these of a permanent character the many other changes such as opening and paving new streets afford the strongest evidence that our city is destined to rank among the other cities of our republic for her beauty and enterprise. The Railroad connecting us with Boston is now in full and successful operation.

Yours truly:

J. J. LANSING.

FROM GEORGE SUMNER

Brussels, Dec. 31, 1841.

My dear Sir,

I have just seen in the *Journal De la Hage* of Thursday last (No. 310) an article copied from the Journal of St. Petersburg, entitled "*Notice sur les Domaines de l'Empires*". The continuation of it was also to appear, perhaps in No. 311 or 312. I have enquired here for extra copies of those papers, but find it impossible to obtain them. May I request you, if it is not too great a liberty, to send me the two or perhaps three nos. which may contain the article I allude to. Please fold them in open form, and direct them to me, *poste restante, Brussels*.

Mr Leemans promised me to send to you any future notices that he might find at Leyden; should you hear anything more, I should be glad if you would let me

HARMANUS BLEECKER

know of it at Paris, where my address is care of Messrs Hottinguer & Co.

I have been about most of the principal towns of Belgium. One cannot fail to be struck in the old *Flemish* provinces, Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges, etc. with the lingering feeling of affection for the *Vaderland*. The leading men of these districts appear, many of them, to be strongly opposed to the introduction of the French language, to the displacement of the Flemish. Opposition is made at Ghent to the process of the Court being in French, and there one might almost imagine himself in an old province of Holland. The newspapers, the notices posted upon the walls, the advertisements, and the *Adresse BAEK* are all in Flemish, and in this a new system of orthography but slightly varying from that of the Dutch has been recently adopted, on the recommendation of the Society for the Encouragement of Flemish Literature.

All these things seem to show a desire to be ready in language as they now are in *feeling*, for a reunion with Holland. But I am wearying you here with details of things which you are already acquainted with, better than myself.

Permit me to thank you for your kind attentions to me while at the Hague and to subscribe myself with respect,

Your friend

and obedient servant,

(Signed) GEORGE SUMNER.

Harmanus Bleecker, Esq.

Chargé d'Affaires

George Sumner was the brilliant younger brother of Charles Sumner, and at this time not yet thirty years old.



LETTERS

FROM J. R. BRODHEAD

London, 8 March 1842.

My dear Sir,

I have little doubt that it will gratify you, almost as much as it has, already, me, to learn that Lord Aberdeen has made up his mind to allow me freely to examine the N. Y. papers in the State Paper office, and to have such of them copied as I may indicate and as shall be approved by an officer who will inspect them. This unexpected liberality of his Lordship is owing entirely to Mr. Everett's unwearied exertions, and the interest he took in the applications. As he told me, just now, the more the difficulties seemed to thicken, the more interested he became in the success of the affair. Lord A. has all along expressed a strong personal feeling in my favor, but he could not bring his mind to the decision he has taken, until Mr. E. had talked with him, over and over, again about it. There have been great difficulties to encounter, and I have given Mr. E. a solemn pledge—which he will communicate to Lord A.—that I shall consider myself bound by every motive that can operate on an honest man, to be blind and dumb to every thing except the papers for which I may obtain permission to have copies made. Lord Canning, made a pointed reference to some remarks Mr. Sparks is alleged to have made in one of his recent lectures at N. Y. reported in the papers there, to this effect; "That he who had made researches in the British archives, might, if not deterred by the motives of propriety, unfold things that would go far to settle pending questions". This, true or false, has had a very injurious effect upon my application. Lord C. has opposed it, while the veteran



HARMANUS BLEECKER

Lord A. has come forward much more liberally than I dared to hope. All that I now want, is to have enough funds put at my command, to complete this undertaking. This is demanded by the *honor*, as well as by the *interest* of the state. I will not refer to the humiliating position in which I must be placed *personally*, if, after all, I am obliged to decline having copies made of the papers, by reason of the want of funds to pay for them.—But *every New Yorker* has an interest in the successful accomplishment of this work. The opportunity now afforded, to enrich our Records with Documents that have long slumbered on the shelves of the British Archives, if suffered to pass unimproved, may never perhaps occur again; and certainly, this Government, cannot be expected to renew the courteous permission at present given, if the state now neglects to profit by it. The state has entered into the work, a considerable sum has already been expended and the Agent has had the door opened for him very wide. The Dutch portion of our Records is now as full as can be expected it will ever be, the English period of our History remains to be illustrated and now the opportunity is given—an opportunity which may never occur again. I hope therefore there will be no backwardness on the part of the Legislature. I understand that Mr. Howard (of Georgia) paid out upwards of \$2000 for copying papers, and as the N. Y. papers are probably much more voluminous than those of Georgia, the expense will be much greater. I have stated my opinion to the Governor that a further appropriation of \$3000 should at once be made; and if this is done, I think there is every reason to believe that the *whole* of the noble enterprise of our state will

## LETTERS

be crowned with complete and triumphant success. Whatever is done by the Legislature, to be of any avail, must be done at this session, otherwise, I must return; and the responsibility of failure must rest upon them. If Messrs. Corning, Flagg, Dix and Young (as he is Secretary of State), should urge this matter, it will be safe. . . .

You will see by the papers that Washington Irving is appointed Minister to Spain.

Affectionately and truly yours,

J. R. BRODHEAD.

FROM J. R. BRODHEAD

London, 15th March, 1842.

My dear Sir,

Since I wrote to you on the 8th, I received a letter from the Governor, desiring me to give him an estimate of what sum it will be necessary for the Legislature to appropriate.—I wrote him in reply, that I supposed it would require *at least* \$3000 more. This estimate is of course somewhat conjectural—it may be enough but I do not think it will be *more* than what will be required.

Somehow or other, I feel a very great regard for Mr. Everett. He has exerted himself very warmly in this affair; and as he told me, took a greater interest in it, the more the difficulties seemed to thicken. It is very fortunate for me that *he* was appointed here. I spent Sunday evening with him and his family at his new abode No. 46 Grosvenor Street. He will receive regularly on Sunday evenings. Mrs. E. the more I see her, the more she pleases me. . . .

HARMANUS BLEECKER

I have just heard that Mr. Motley the Secretary of Legation at St. Petersburg has resigned his post and is now at Paris. I confess this surprises me very much. Mr. Todd, the minister there, will, I fancy, find himself unpleasantly situated, as I presume he knows hardly a word of French and strongly suspect that he is not very fluent at Russian. The loss of his Secretary must be a serious annoyance to him. . . .

Believe me, dear Sir,

Hastily yours,

J. R. BRODHEAD.

FROM J. R. BRODHEAD

London, 19 April, 1842.

My dear Sir,

Last week I received your letter of the 6th and the accompanying Historical Documents from Mr. de Zwann.

. . . I have been very busily occupied in the State Paper Office, since I wrote you, and have made rapid progress. I have already marked for copying upwards of 2500 pages and have only got down to 1700. At this rate, and judging from the best opportunities I have for forming an opinion, I think that at least 10,000 pages can be obtained, if the requisite means are provided. My permission allows me "*Freely to examine all the New York papers from the Commencement to the year 1776, and to mark such of them as I may desire to have copied.*"—I am under an obligation not to speak of any particulars I may ascertain; but am to consider myself as "*Pro hoc vice*" one of the government clerks— The documents are first to be examined and approved of, before copies are to be made.

## LETTERS

I am afraid however after all, the Legislature will do nothing. I see they resolved to adjourn on the 12th of this month, which is at least 5 or 6 weeks earlier than usual. If so, I am afraid this mission has gone by the Board. But so fully persuaded am I, of the great importance of *now* getting this matter through, that I have offered to the N. Y. Historical Society, that (in case the Legislature has done nothing) if they will provide the means of paying for the copying fees here, I will devote my time and labor to the object, *gratis*. It is indeed, too great and valuable an opportunity to be lost now and I would most willingly submit to pinch and screw, and deny myself, if the great end can thereby be accomplished. At present I have marked nearly or quite enough papers to consume all the balance of the appropriation at my disposal; and my present plan is, to set copyists to work at once, and (as I cannot go on and make a list of the papers here, without transcribing them), to go to Paris as soon as I hear from General Cass, to whom I have written to procure M. Guizot's permission. If this is granted, I propose to make a complete analysis or list of all the papers in the French Archives affecting our History and deposit the same, on my return, with the Secretary of State. By this means my duty will be done; and any person, by sending a memorandum to a friend in Paris, of the papers he wishes, can have copies made. But this I cannot do for several weeks yet—perhaps not before June.

. . . Please let François give the enclosed to Mr. de Zwann.

I am, dear Sir, in haste,

Yours affectionately,

J. R. BRODHEAD.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

FROM J. ROMEYN BRODHEAD

London, 26 April, 1842

My dear Sir,

Mr. W. Irving has embarked in the *Independence* and we may now soon hope to see him here. You know that Mr. J. G. Cogswell of N. Y. was appointed his Secretary of Legation. (Mr. C. is Editor of the N. Y. Review). Mr. Astor however, on hearing of this—at once said it was too bad to lose Mr. Irving and Mr. Cogswell both and so he made Mr. C. the offer of the Librarianship of the new institution he has endowed—and bound himself to give Mr. C. a salary *for life* of \$2000 per an. Mr. C. at once accepted it and resigned his secretaryship. This I think most noble in the old gentleman.

. . . I suppose we shall hear something from N. Y. by the packet ship of the 1st; as there were few letters by the steamer, which left Halifax in a crippled condition and made the voyage across the Atlantic with only one paddle wheel, a most venturous attempt. After all, the experience of the last winter is rather against ocean steamers in stormy weather. It is not common to hear of accidents to good and staunch sailing vessels, when at sea. Their chief danger is from an inability to work off what is called a "Lee shore". In every position, I think sailing vessels are far safer, if they are not as rapid, as steamers.

I have just received a kind letter from General Cass, who takes a warm interest in the proposed investigations at Paris.

I am, dear Sir,

In haste,

Yours most truly,

J. ROMEYN BRODHEAD.

H. Bleecker, esqre.



## LETTERS

The weather for the last 3 or 4 days has been most charming. I hope you have had it as fine at the Hague. The Bosch must already begin to look superb.

FROM J. ROMEYN BRODHEAD

London, 6 May, 1842

My dear Sir,

. . . I have just received the very gratifying news that the Legislature have made a further appropriation of \$3000 for the purposes of the Agency. I am well assured that I owe much to your kind and friendly letters—and I need not make you, I am sure, any formal tender of thanks.

. . . From what you say in your last, of your being homesick, I suppose there must be some truth in the rumor of your intention to return. It is rumored at W. that Mr. Hughes will probably be sent again to his old post at the Hague, on your return—Have you determined positively on the time of your leaving?

. . . Please let François put the enclosed, in the P. O. for Mr. V. D. B.—and believe me

dear Sir, affectionately and truly yours,

J. ROMEYN BRODHEAD.

FROM J. ROMEYN BRODHEAD

Paris, Saturday Evening 23 July 1842

My dear Sir,

I have this moment received your kind letter of 20th inst. and hasten to consecrate (as the French say) my first leisure moment to answering it.

. . . I wrote you most promptly on the receipt of yours of the 7th and gave my letter in charge of a



Mr. Hoffman of New York who was journeying Hague-wards. Subsequently young Mr. Maxwell of New York went on, and I gave him a note of introduction to you, which I suppose he has before now handed you. I hope Mr. H. has not failed to deliver the letter I entrusted to him—though I feel some little compunction at troubling you with any business of the kind referred to in it, at the moment you are preparing to leave the good Vaderland. To tell you the sober truth, I am afraid I love the good old country too much—not but that my own native land is quite attractive enough for me—but there is a longing clinging affection for Holland implanted in my heart which I am sure will never be eradicated, and which may perhaps give me some annoyance hereafter when the means of revisiting it may not be within my power. Still, one consideration must ever weigh very strongly with me. The friend to whom I owe so much will probably have bid it a long *adieu*, and one of the chief attractions that I found to the Hague be gone.— Memory will have to supply the place of anticipation—and I am sure every recollection I have or will have of the days I spent at the Hague will be connected with the thought of how much I owe to your sincere friendship.

I dare say it will gratify you to hear that I am meeting with good success here. The documents in the ministry of the Colonies are exceedingly voluminous though very badly arranged. This of course adds much to the difficulty of the investigation, but I find a very ample recompense for the additional labor in the interesting character of the papers themselves. . . . I am now finding out every day the most valuable papers explaining the French policy in regard to their designs for the extension of empire, and especially against New

## LETTERS

York. The papers extend down to the period of the treaty of 1763—at which time the Canadian possessions you know were surrendered to England. . . .

Believe me ever, dear Sir,

Yours most affectionately,  
J. ROMEYN BRODHEAD.

FROM J. R. BRODHEAD

Paris, 15 October, 1842.

My dear Sir,

. . . I wish I could have spent a longer time with you at the Hague. My heart bounded with joy, when there, at meeting so many kind faces, and receiving so many marks of friendship. There is a great goodness of heart among the people of Holland, and I would be ungrateful, indeed, if I did not cherish a warm recollection of the friendship that has been shown to the "Stranger in a strange land."

But you cannot doubt, my dear Sir, that though here, my heart has been with you, and many a thought has been directed toward you and yours at the Hague. My having had the satisfaction to be present at your wedding will always be a subject of pleasurable reminiscence for me; and, indeed, if I had not gone to the Hague on the occasion, I am sure I would never have forgiven myself. It was but a feeble expression, at best, of the sentiments of gratitude and affection I must ever entertain towards you.

. . . I promise myself much pleasure hereafter in taking a comfortable cup of tea with you and your good lady at Albany; and in calling to mind many an incident of Hague life, the recollection of which, when far away from the scene, will become more and more gratifying.

As to Paris affairs, there is but little news. I am

HARMANUS BLEECKER

going on in the "even tenor of my way", working from morning till night at my archives—and daily finding out interesting and valuable matter. I have just found out a new mine which I am now working—in the War Correspondence from 1754. Marshall Sault gave me a very liberal permission and the whole of Montcalm's, Dierhan's and Vaudreuil's correspondence is now under examination. I shall in consequence, not be able to leave here for London till sometime in November. I have seen a good deal of Governor Throop who is spending the winter here. He desires me when I write to make you his warm regards.

General Cass has requested his recall, and will leave Liverpool in the Boston Steamer of 19th of November. Mr. Ledyard will probably remain here as *chargé ad interim*, and very probably as Secretary of Legation to the new Minister as he will be indispensable to him, whoever he may be. It is of course impossible to speculate upon who will be appointed.

I congratulate you on the ratification of the Treaty of Washington. It is, I hope, the precursor of a better state of things at home; and indeed the effects are now beginning to be seen. I have not yet had any letter by the G. W. but I presume no appropriation has been made at the last session. The Governor seemed to think that it would be made at the next session—but for this we must wait. If the importance of its being made were only known at home, I don't think there would be any hesitation.

I have only space to send my most kind regards to Mrs. B. and to request you to remember me to all friends at the Hague.

Most affectionately and truly yours,

J. R. BRODHEAD.

LETTERS

FROM J. ROMEYN BRODHEAD

London, 22d Nov, 1842.

My dear Sir,

I arrived here a few days ago, in good health, and am now very comfortably established in lodgings in Pimlico. Genl. Cass came over at the same time, & sailed on Saturday for Boston. I suppose the ball will soon be fairly opened, & we must consider him as one of the prominent Candidates for the Presidency. Just before he left Paris he had one of the most magnificent dinners given to him, ever prepared at the Trois Frères Provinceaux. There were 85 of us who sat down & the utmost good feeling prevailed. . . . The only invited guest, except Genl. Cass & his family, was G. W. Lafayette.

I have not heard from you for some time, nor indeed have I had any time to write myself—I was so busy and hurried in getting ready to leave Paris. But I hope I am now settled for the winter—& will no doubt be able to be a more regular, & a *less* expensive correspondent through our friend Miller's parcels—All well at home at the last advices—

I will write you again soon, but as Mr. M is in a hurry to close his parcel, I have only time now to send my most sincere regards to Mrs. B. & my most affectionate remembrances to yourself.

J. ROMEYN BRODHEAD.

N.B. Pray write me as often as convenient this winter.

H. Bleecker, Esq.

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The next two letters were received in Albany after Mr. Bleecker's return from the Netherlands.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

FROM A. DAVEZAC

The Hague

My dear friend,

In gratitude to you for your kind and very interesting letter, independently of the pleasure it always gives me to commune with you, I proceed to give you a brief statement of the present aspect of the political state of this kingdom.

The promise made to the nation by the King to propose to the Legislature the long wished for changes in the fundamental laws, have created thro' the land deep feelings of mingled hopes and fears. Hopes, that entering at last in the broad road of progress in liberal institutions, he is determined to render the Constitution of the Netherlands more in harmony with the sentiments of an enlightened people and the spirit of the age—fears lest his generous nature may be checked in the onward course to which his Speech to the Legislature points, by the opinions of men far inferior to himself both in general information and special knowledge of the true interests of the nation his ancestors have governed with so much glory. The inclosed circular by the Minister, addressed to the governors of the Provinces, will show you that he intends to propose important alterations in the existing laws regulating “*Les droits d'entrées de sorties d'accises*”.

The Diplomatic Corps, with the exception of Maltsby and Desborough, is composed of new members. Society as it is called here, continues much as it was when you left us. The Katendykes, have returned to Paris, where they live three-fourths of the year. They charged me to remind you and your wife of their unaltered friendship. Mrs. Bleecker's friends are well. Haltrap and Camp-



## LETTERS

bell speak of you as if it was only yesterday they parted from you.

The results of the Pennsylvania, Georgia and Maryland (elections) are I hope augural of the sweep of Democracy in the coming contest for the Presidency. If New York could but agree in the choice of that good, great, and safe statesman, Van Buren, I think we could depend on a triumphant victory.

Present me most respectfully to Mrs Bleeker and also for yourself accept the sincere assurance of my most cordial and devoted friendship.

A. DAVEZAC.

(January 5, 1848)

FROM MISS ANNA BRIDGEN

Stockbridge, Aug. 1847.

Many thanks my dear Mr. Bleeker for your kind letter. It adds another to the many offices of friendship we have received from you, in what is beginning to be a long life—and will I hope continue to link us together in a bond of friendship as long as that life endure. Your intelligence does not seem to be very encouraging with regard to the water works stock—there is no remedy but patience and submission in such an affair. May I ask the favour of you if you should conclude to think it expedient to do anything with your own to remember we should be very grateful if you would give us your advice.

I should have answered your letter many days ago dear Sir—I felt the value of its kindness too much not to acknowledge it immediately—but I wanted to write a Day after the Fair. I knew Mrs. Bleeker would be



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interested in the results—and accordingly she has drawn Kitty's purse—which Mrs. Sedgwick is keeping for a safe opportunity to transmit to her. The fair was most successful. Lenox & Pittsfield poured in their tributary streams under the influence of a superbe day & sublime night. Every thing sold for just what they had the conscience to ask. Tea coffee & Ices were at a premium Mr. Watts striped his Garden & sold his flowers, in short the carnival at Rome the Bull fights at Madrid & Epsom races could not have delighted their constituents more than we Stockbridgeans were on this occasion,—and the Lady Managers who walked home with over-flowing sacks of money were most satisfied because ‘they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.’ Your friends are all well.

Please to offer Mrs. Bleecker the most cordial regards from my sister and self and both of you accept our earnest desires for the continuance of your happiness and every other good thing that can await you.

ANNA BRIDGEN.

FROM MISS ANNA BRIDGEN

TO MRS. BLEECKER, IN ALBANY, WRITTEN A FEW MONTHS  
AFTER MR. BLEECKER'S DEATH

My dear Mrs. Bleecker

. . . Mrs. Sedgwick is now here for a short time. I was shocked to see her look so ill. She wishes you very much to come to her in January I do hope you will—it will break up the monotony of the long winter and strengthen the bonds of friendship between you. Do you know I think one of the great objections to living too comfortable at home is that we become slaves to it—

## LETTERS

it enervates our courage and we are afraid of change—which sometimes would result in the highest enjoyment—besides the interruption (when it is one) always enhances the enjoyment when you return. I know that you fear returning from a social friendly influence to a melancholy home. Well, brave all that and you still will bring home memories of your visit charming and consolatory to you. When I was a young woman I was always ready for such expeditions and in this my old age I look back with grateful pleasure upon those recollections.

Miss Bremer \* is receiving a great deal of attention here. She has one sure mode of making friends—she praises every thing and says adroit pretty things. She told Washington Irving that in Sweden they did not know much of America still she had heard & had her head & heart full of Niagara,—Washington and Washington Irving. She is said to be a Socialist and Transcendentalist which are not quite congenial to my modes of faith and thinking. I read an anecdote the other day while Fanny Esler was in this country. Miss Margaret Fuller attended by Mr. Emerson went to see her; in the middle of one of her piroquets Miss Fuller in a rapture of admiration said “Emerson that is poetry”, “No Margaret”, said he “it is religion”. There is a climax for you certainly illustrative of transcendentalism. You have heard I suppose that Miss Fuller is married to an Italian Marquis. She said sometime ago she should not return to America until she had finished her great work. She has a little son—and as she has announced her return he is supposed to be her great work.

\* Frederica Bremer the writer.

HARMANUS BLEECKER

I have not read Shirley. I did not like the physiognomy of its pages—they looked tedious but I am reading a delightful book of Thierry entitled “*Dix ans D’etudes Historiques*”;—the autobiographical preface has almost made me democratic and it requires a rare peice of eloquence to do that.

The other night I met at a party and had a long conversation with our Ex-Ambassador Mr. Bancroft. He spoke of your husband with great veneration and respect. I wish you could have heard him. . . .

Your Affec. friend

ANNA BRIDGEN.

Dec. 18th, 1849  
New York

## APPENDIX I

H. Bleecker Esquire.

*Albany, May 10, 1824.*

SIR,

The Regents of the University having, at their last meeting, resolved to visit, during the present year, the several Colleges and Academies in the State which are subject to their visitation, and having directed copies of their resolution, together with copies of the standing instructions to Visiting Committees, to be transmitted by their Secretary to the Regents individually; I have the honor, in compliance with such order, to transmit to you the following resolution and instructions:

At a Meeting of the Regents of the University,  
held pursuant to adjournment in the  
Senate Chamber, April 9, 1824,

IT WAS RESOLVED, That the Regents severally visit the Colleges and Academies in this State, as follows, to wit:

*Henry Rutgers and Matthew Clarkson*, to visit Columbia College, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons in the city of New York, Clinton Academy in Suffolk County, Erasmus Hall in Kings, Oyster Bay and Union Hall Academies in Queens County.

*James King*, to visit Bloomingrove, Montgomery, Newburg, and Farmers Hall Academies in Orange County, and Bloomingburg in Sullivan County.

*William L. Marcy*, Dutchess County Academy at Poughkeepsie, and Kingston Academy at Kingston, Ulster County.

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*Elisha Jenkins*, Hudson Academy.

*John Lansing Jun.* Lansingburgh Academy.

*John Taylor*, Albany Academy.

*Samuel Young*, Hamilton College, Washington Academy at Salem, and Cambridge Washington Academy at Cambridge.

*Peter Wendell*, College of Physicians and Surgeons of the Western District, and Fairfield Academy at Fairfield.

*De Witt Clinton*, Delaware Academy at Delhi.

*Erastus Root*, Oxford Academy at Oxford, and Cortland Academy at Homer.

*James Thompson*, Ballston Academy.

*Peter B. Porter*, Middlebury Academy at Middlebury.

*Robert Troup*, Canandaigua, Geneva, Onondaga, Pompey, Auburn and Cayuga Academies.

*Martin Van Buren*, Cherry Valley, Hartwick and Greenville Academies.

*Stephen Van Rensselaer*, Lowville Academy, (Lewis county,) and St. Lawrence Academy at Pottsdam, St. Lawrence County.

*Samuel A. Talcott*, Whitesborough and Utica Academies.

*H. Bleecker*, *J. King*, and *P. Wendell*, Union College and Schenectady Academy.

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*Instructions to Visiting Committees.*

At a Meeting of the Regents of the University,  
held on the 28th January, 1794,

IT WAS RESOLVED, That it be strictly enjoined on each  
of the Visiting Committees, to deliver or cause to be

# APPENDIX I

delivered, a report of their respective visitations to the Board, at their annual meeting prescribed by the Legislature.

RESOLVED, That these Reports contain the number of students in each seminary; the branches of education in which they are taught; the established rates of tuition; the changes which take place from time to time in their systems of education and government; the number and employment of the teachers; the salaries which they respectively receive, and a state of the annual revenue from the funds or estates of each institution.

The following distribution of monies was made by the Regents of the University for the present year, (1824) among the Academies from which the necessary reports had been received, viz: To

<i>Names of Academies.</i>	<i>Whole No. of Scholars.</i>	<i>No. of Classical Do.</i>	<i>Amt. of Money apportioned.</i>
Albany Academy,	135	68	\$399 50
Auburn,	52	28	164 50
Ballstown,	31	15	88 12
Bloomingrove,	27	16	94 12
Cambridge,	57	22	129 25
Cayuga, (Aurora)	157	24	141 12
Cherry Valley,	31	19*	111 63
Clinton, (Easthampton, Suffolk co.)	132	7	41 25
Courtland, (Homer)	85	31	182 12
Delaware,	33	7	41 25
Dutchess,	43	39	229 12
Erasmus Hall, (Kings co.)	102	19	111 67
Fairfield,		25	146 87
Farmers' Hall, (Goshen)	39	12	70 50
Geneva,	100	39	229 12
Greenville, (Greene co.)	25	13	76 50
Hamilton, (Madison co.)	52	13	76 50
Hartwick, (Otsego)	41	27	158 62
Hudson,	93	23	135 12
Johnstown,		14	82 28
Kingston,	56	22	129 25
Lansingburgh,	117	32	188 00
Lowville, (Lewis co.)	84	29	170 37



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<i>Names of Academies.</i>	<i>Whole No. of Scholars.</i>	<i>No. of Classical Do.</i>	<i>Amt. of Money apportioned.</i>
Middlebury, (Genesee)	83	15	88 12
Montgomery (Ulster co.)	108	15	88 12
Newburgh,	78	18	105 75
Onondaga,	76	12	70 50
Oysterbay, (Queens co.)	45	5	29 37
Oxford, (Chenango)	64	44†	258 00
Pompey,	83	17	99 88
Schenectady,	28	24	141 00
St Lawrence, (Potsdam)	172	29	170 37
Union Hall, (Jamaica, Queens co.)	101	62	364 25
Utica,	86	21	123 37
Washington, (Salem)	51	29	170 37
Whitesborough,	110	16	94 12
	<hr/> 2677	<hr/> 851	<hr/> \$5000 00
			at \$5 87 =

\* Of whom 4 are females.      † Of whom 4 are females.

I certify, that the foregoing are true extracts from the minutes of the Regents of the University.

*Albany, May 10, 1824.*

GIDEON HAWLEY,

Secretary of the Regents &c.

## APPENDIX II KERKE BRIEFJES

*Lijst der Predikanten,*

welke de Godsdienstoeffening in de onderstaande Kerken, zullen waarnemen.

10de Zondag 10 Maart 1839.

Voormiddagpredikatie ten tien ure.

25de Lijdenst., Matthew 27 vs. 33, 34 en 38.

Namiddagpredikatie en twee ure.

Avondpredikatie ten half zes ure.

26de Tekst, Joh. 19 vs. 19—24.

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## APPENDIX II

### KLOOSTER KERK.

Voormiddag	<i>Molenaar.</i>
Namiddag	<i>Dermout.</i>

### NIEUWE KERK.

Voormiddag	<i>Huijdecoper.</i>
Namiddag,	ten half één ure.
Voor de Militairen.	<i>Timm. Verhoeven.</i>
5de Tekst. Matth. 27	vs. 15—31.

### GROOTE KERK.

Voormiddag	<i>van den Broek.</i>
Namiddag	<i>de Willigen.</i>
Avond	<i>Roozeboom.</i>
Ten half zes ure.	

### WAALSCH E KERK.

Voormiddag	<i>de Chauffepié.</i>
Avond	<i>Revel.</i>
Ten half zes ure.	

Woensdag Avond	ten half zes ure.
27ste Tekst, Matth. 27,	vs. 39—44.
Groote kerk.	<i>Moll.</i>

Vrijdag Voormiddag	ten tien ure.
28ste Tekst, Joh. 19,	vs. 25—27.
Klooster kerk.	<i>Lens.</i>

Vrijdag Namiddag	Groote Kerk
Catech. ten 3 ure.	<i>Dermout.</i>
Over Efesen I. Eerste gedeelte.	
	part, portion.

*J. H. BECK*, Kalvermarkt, Q, No. 255

TEN VOORDEELE VOOR DE ARMEN.



















